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Action, romance in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* ... p. 7

Singing is twice praying ... p. 13

56th year of publication

Pastoral letter addresses environmental problems in Columbia River Basin

Alan Doerksen

NELSON, B.C. — Catholic bishops in B.C. and the American Northwest have written a ground-breaking international pastoral letter detailing the problems faced by the Columbia River Basin, and challenging politicians and industrial leaders to do something to improve the situation.

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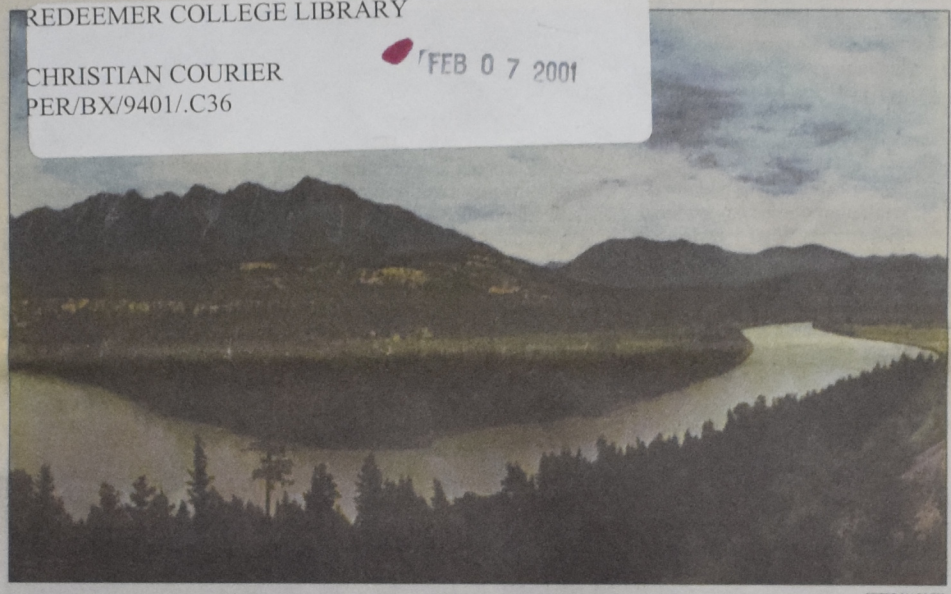

PETER VARLEY

The Kootenay River, a tributary of the Columbia, which flows through southeastern B.C.

'Very important letter'

"This is a very important letter. It's a big move," asserts John Wood, CC's environment columnist and associate professor of biology and environmental studies at the King's University College in Edmonton. "The Catholic Church here in Canada is taking a very strong stand. I'm excited about it.... They've shown the multifaceted nature of the problems."

Wood explains, "What we're seeing is a culmination of over a decade's worth of effort.... This isn't appearing out of nowhere. It's coming in a context. The contemporary creation is now on the theological radar screen."

The writers of the pastoral letter, entitled *The Columbia River Watershed: Caring for Creation and the Common Good*, explain, "We, the Catholic bishops of the U.S. and Canada represented in the international watershed region, write this pastoral letter because we have become concerned about regional economic and ecological conditions and the conflicts over them in the watershed. We address this letter to our Catholic community and to all people of good will. We hope that we might work together and develop and implement an integrated spiritual, social and ecological vision for our watershed home, a vision that promotes justice for people and stewardship of creation." The letter was signed by bishops and archbishops from B.C., Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, including Bishop Eugene Cooney of the diocese of Nelson, B.C. It will be distributed widely over the next few weeks.

Dangers to salmon

"The Columbia starts in our diocese," says Cooney, who was asked by American bishops to help write the letter. They met several times on both sides of the border to write it. In late January, the letter was scheduled to be published in booklet form.

Cooney cites dangers to salmon as one of the key problems facing the watershed. "This basin used to

See **BISHOPS** *page 2...*

Pastors pay 'war tax' to Colombian guerrillas

Deann Alford

AUSTIN, Texas (Compass) — No one in the church office knew the short, dark, plumpish man of around 25 whose face, serious and suspicious, gave him the look of someone deeply troubled. His loose clothing suggested that he was a poor peasant.

The man wanted to talk to Juan Garcia (names altered), a busy, prominent pastor who ministers in a Colombian city beset by violence and guerrilla intrigue. Garcia's secretary gave the man a 6:30 a.m. appointment, and the two met in the pastor's office.

The man claimed to be part of the country's largest guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) ... and he wanted money.

After subsequent encounters with the man, Garcia and fellow church worker Joe Turner concluded that the man was a common criminal and was not acting on the FARC's behalf. Or was he? FARC is known for its vast intelligence network. "It's clear that he knows a lot about the church," Turner said.

Pay or be kidnapped

The FARC and Colombia's other violent groups are demanding money from churches and pastors in the form of "war taxes" to support their activities. Failure to comply invites kidnapping or death for the pastor or his family.

Extortion has become a booming industry in Colombia, fed by public fear of these violent groups. When someone claims to be acting in behalf of a guerrilla group, few will risk questioning credentials. That's one of the many perils besetting those who minister in this country. It is plagued by rebel groups that want to impose their brand of communism on Colombia, and by their opponents, right-wing paramilitaries and Colombia's army itself.

"One of those who visited was with the FARC," Garcia said. "Ones who visited later looked very different. They all (demand money) in the name of the FARC. Sometimes we know who they are, but sometimes we don't know who's just a common delinquent taking advantage of the situation."

Extortion very profitable

"The extortion business is very profitable, and there are people who practice this in the name of the guerrillas."

The pastor has had other encounters with true FARC operatives who demand money. The latest demand from the rebels was in late September for $3,000. He's heard of guerrillas asking pastors for as much as $15,000 — an amount three times the annual salary of an average Colombian pastor.

Garcia said he knows he's in danger because he's not paying them, despite the fact that they have made clear to all what will happen to those who defy them. He knows the guerrillas could snatch him at any moment but says he's prepared to face the consequences. And, should he be taken, he's made his wishes known to his family.

"I made a commitment, first with God, then with myself, then with my family: Don't pay money if something happens," Garcia said. He knows that not paying probably means dying, but the entire church is in grave danger if he or any other evangelical

See **EVANGELICALS** *p. 2...*

News

Bishops urge preservation of Columbia River Basin

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be one of the biggest spawning grounds for salmon, but not anymore."

The letter takes a reflective, descriptive look at the watershed. It criticizes the pollution and degradation which agriculture, mining and forestry have caused to the watershed, but also acknowledges their positive contributions, such as providing jobs to the region's people.

DIOCESE OF NELSON, B.C. WEBSITE PHOTO

Bishop Eugene Cooney of the diocese of Nelson, B.C.

Contradictions evident

"Contradictions in human behavior are evident throughout the region," states the letter. "There are beautiful farms and deteriorated riverbanks; degraded forests and landscaped community parks; chemical and radioactive wastes seeping into the rivers; and conscientious children cleaning streambeds. In areas of Canada, extremes in river levels that prevent the existence of both natural ecologies and human enterprises are caused by dams built primarily to meet U.S. needs for energy and flood control....

"Throughout the past century, industrial development provided needed goods and jobs in the watershed and beyond. Sometimes this development resulted in harm for the watershed. Dams provide energy, and aluminum plants provide airplane parts. But the construction and use of these human structures have been accompanied by the loss of fishing-related enterprises.... Modern technology has provided better living, but has also produced chemical and radioactive waste storage sites that pose serious threats for the area.

"The endangerment and possible extinction of the area's animal and fish species are of notable concern in our day."

Although the letter mentions, "some urge breaching the four dams on the lower Snake River in order to improve the water environment for fish," the bishops do not come out in support of that idea, but suggest that "serious discussions and serious scientific research continue in order to assure the presence of a habitat suitable for the native fish of the region."

On a positive note, the letter mentions, "Efforts to use profits from U.S. dam operations to compensate Canadian communities most heavily impacted are a sign of a stronger sense of justice."

Places for quiet reflection

The bishops emphasize the importance of preserving the region's use for recreation, rest and recuperation: "People need places for quiet reflection, meditation, appreciation of God's creation, relaxed fishing and rigorous exercise." But they suggest that "more intrusive motorized means of recreation be limited, in order to allow reflective people a restorative contact with the presence of God in pristine creation."

The letter cites many biblical passages that focus on the importance of Christian stewardship of the environment and of preserving it for the common good. "The biblical tradition states that ecological harm is caused by human sinfulness," says the letter. "Paul states in the letter to the Romans (8:22) that all creation, suffering from the effects of human sinfulness, groans for salvation."

The bishops offer their vision of the ideal state for the watershed: "In our idealized ecological vision, we see the Columbia watershed community inhabiting an environment of clean land, clear water and pure air. In that vision, the ecology is altered only by the earth's natural colorations, seasonal variations, and people's responsible use of the earth's goods...."

The bishops would like to see "community and individual needs take priority over private wants." As an example, the bishops urge that "government and banking policies and laws encourage family agriculture, including both private and co-operative enterprises, in the Columbia Watershed."

"People live in the world of nature, not apart from it," states the letter. "They need to alter that world at times in order to provide for their needs. The means are now available to use regional resources more efficiently, while doing much less harm to regional ecologies."

Protestants can agree

Although written by Catholic bishops, Wood believes the letter is "a document Protestants could read and agree with." The letter is unusual because it follows natural and geographical, rather than political boundaries, says Wood. "This is new. It's watershed-based.... It's a recognition of these systems as they're created by God."

Although the letter is about 20 pages long, Wood notes, "It's very readable. This is something for people in the church, not specialists." Already, the letter has gotten attention from some of his colleagues from coast to coast in the U.S., says Wood.

Wood also appreciates the historical perspective of the letter, including "the recognition that we are no longer newcomers." The letter is also careful not to criticize those people living in the Columbia River basin.

Wood is impressed that Catholics, in situations like this, "take action. They go out there and act on their concerns for God's creation... The Protestant churches, for the main part, are not large enough to do something like that." Instead, Protestants tend to undertake "highly localized kinds of things."

Wood notes that "conservative Christians have been slow to respond" on environmental issues. "Most commentators suggest that conservative Christians, despite several decades of effort, are still hesitant to get involved in environmental issues. But that might change quickly with the right issue or spokesperson on the scene."

According to Wood, many elements of the environmental community, including the president of the Sierra Club, have said, in effect, "We need the church."

Evangelicals divided on paying ransom for pastors

... continued from page 1

pays ransoms.

"The (FARC) itself has said that the worst business is to kidnap pastors and missionaries. They've done it, and there's been no payment," Garcia said.

Opinion divided

Generally speaking, that is. "Sometimes they've paid. This is the problem, and it has divided evangelical opinion because the vast majority is not in agreement with paying," Garcia said. "That's because in addition to inviting more kidnapping, paying the guerrillas just fuels the violence that is destroying Colombia — violence that the church vehemently opposes."

But it's hard to stick to principle when the FARC goes after a pastor's family. One way FARC coerces compliance to their demands is by kidnapping the children.

"The guerrillas 'recruit' young people and train them to serve in their ranks," Garcia said. "The children are those who die the most in combat because the guerrilla bosses send them to the front to fight and they fall against state forces or the ultra-right." He said that in November, FARC kidnapped more than 300 children.

That's why some pastors break up their families and send their children to safer places within the country. But in reality, there are no safe places in Colombia. Garcia's two children, 12 and 15 years old, remain with him.

Travel dangerous

In addition to the "war tax" that some pastors pay guerrillas, ministering in Colombia is very expensive because cheap travel by car or bus is dangerous.

"You can't go by highway," the pastor said. "There's combat, there are guerrilla roadblocks" where FARC militants "fish" for people to take hostage, "and there's crossfire. It's better to pay for an air ticket, even though it's expensive, than to risk travel through the conflict zone."

Is there a way to escape? "To avoid this, you have to pay or flee the country," Garcia said. "Sometimes this is what you think about. It's tempting. If God makes a way, then yes, but not if I don't see it's from the Lord. If I know that still I can be here, then I'll be here.

GERARD BOUTIN, *EXPLORER*

Bogota, the capital and largest city of Colombia.

"There's a lot of people fleeing the country every day. But if we all leave, who will work here? We can't all go."

But even in dangerous Colombia, leaving for other countries is sometimes worse.

"There are people who have had to leave very quickly without preparing themselves mentally, leaving many things behind, and without establishing contacts, like where they were going to arrive," he said. "Sometimes when they arrive, they find they're not in the best circumstances. The majority of those who have left for other countries are having very hard times with it, and they're asking themselves what would have been better."

There's no easy solution for Colombia's pastors. "Danger is around you all over, but you learn to live with these types of things," Garcia said. "It's a country where no one's life is guaranteed. But here we are. God has us here, and we're here to do His work."

The pastor says that there's no end in sight to the violence overwhelming Colombia. "We believe that things here can get worse," Garcia said. "We have to be ready for it."

Can anything be done?

"Three things," the pastor said: "Pray, pray and pray."

Some ministries may be forced to pull out of Colombia

Deann Alford

AUSTIN, Texas (Compass) — Amid Colombia's rising tide of violence between rebels, paramilitaries and the nation's army, its people need help and encouragement more than ever. But the danger has forced many international ministries working in the country to re-think plans or even consider pulling out.

Hit hard by violence

Perhaps no other evangelical ministry in Colombia has been hit harder by the violence than New Tribes Mission (NTM). In January 1993, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas kidnapped Mark Rich, Dave Mankins and Rick Tenenoff near Panama's border. The mission is still trying to learn what happened to the men. The U.S. State Department believes they are dead.

In January 1994, the FARC kidnapped Steve Welsh and Timothy Van Dyke. The two died in a battle between FARC forces and Colombia's army. In the mid 1980s, FARC guerrillas snatched NTM's Paul Dye, Steve Estelle, and Tim and Bunny Cain and their airplane. The missionaries were held for two months before guerrillas released them.

NTM has taken its 14 missionaries from remote areas and moved most of them to Bogota, where they still try to work on translating the Bible into indigenous languages. "Informants" from the target people groups where the missionaries used to live now help by traveling to the cities where the translators have moved.

But times have changed. When missionaries first became kidnap targets, the guerrillas were somewhat isolated in Colombia and not a widespread threat, said NTM spokesman Scott Ross. "Now they're all over the country."

"Over the next few months, we're going to be looking at whether we even want to leave the few that we have in Colombia," Ross said. "With the peace process collapsing and renewed fighting, it's deteriorated to the place where we have to consider whether it's good management to have our people there anymore.

The last straw

"We don't want to disappoint missionaries there by asking them to leave the country, but we're going to keep a very close eye on the security of our folks, and they very likely will have to pull out. The risk is just so high in Colombia."

NTM isn't the only group changing plans in the wake of kidnappings. The last straw for the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Colombia was the 1994 snatching of missionary Ray Rising from SIL's translation centre in Lomalinda, about 150 miles southeast of Bogota. Guerrillas had overrun that area, so about a year after Rising's abduction, SIL closed the Lomalinda centre.

Rising's abduction ended almost three years after his kidnapping when the radio specialist was released unharmed.

"We're pretty much confined to city operations," said Dave Underwood, SIL's area director for the Americas.

Missionaries from the United States and Europe are especially vulnerable as leftist rebels widely regard them as "imperialists" who are spreading a message that counters their own. That's one reason why SIL has set up a training program for its work to go on through national workers.

"We're definitely interested in training Colombians to be involved in Bible translation, but we're doing that all over the hemisphere, so it's not unique to Colombia," Underwood said.

While the danger is relatively less in Colombia's cities, none are havens. Christ for the City International (CFCI) director Chip Anderson said that an increase in guerrilla activity caused his organization to draw up contingency plans for its five national and two American missionaries in the cities of Cali, Medellin and Armenia.

"There have been visits by FARC intelligence officers to evangelical missionaries threatening them if they don't leave the city," Anderson said. In just three months, guerrillas have closed in on Medellin and now control areas up to the outskirts of this city of 3 million. If CFCI's workers receive serious threats, plans call for moving the ministry to Bogota, Anderson said.

Latin America Mission's 60-year presence in Colombia spans the turbulent 1940s and 1950s, years of fighting known as "La Violencia." Now it has 13 missionaries in Colombia's cities, including Bogota, Medellin and Cartagena. Whether LAM workers stay or flee is left up to the workers themselves, said its president, David Befus.

Training advisor Nick Woodbury said that LAM's workers have had "nothing out of the ordinary" happen in recent years while serving on staff. All LAM missionaries work in cities, where danger from common criminals, rather than guerrillas and paramilitaries, is still the greater threat. "It isn't any more of a problem than in the past," he said. "Everybody's trying to be prudent. They keep low profiles, are cautious and continue ministering."

Those precautions can seem stifling. "The (LAM) short-term missionaries there felt like prisoners because you can't go out into the street like you could if you were in any other city," Woodbury said.

He said that while Christians feeling called to serve in Colombia should be mindful of the situation, he hopes that fear doesn't deter them from ministry there.

"I would hate to see Colombia abandoned at this time," Woodbury said. "This is the time when pastors and Christian leaders there need encouragement."

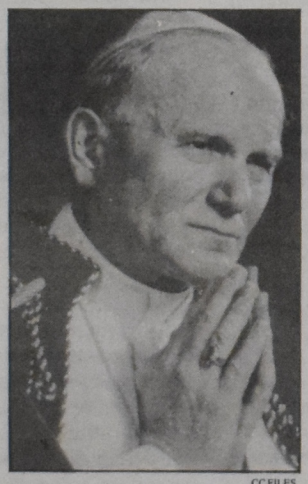
Pope John Paul II calls for 'ecological conversion'

VATICAN CITY (ZENIT) — John Paul II called for an "ecological conversion" as the indispensable condition to avoid a potential catastrophe for mankind.

"The harmony of man's relations with nature is continually upset by human sin," the Pope said during a traditional Wednesday general audience, with thousands of pilgrims present. He pleaded for a "human ecology" which will "render the life of creatures more dignified, protecting the radical good of life in all its manifestations, and preparing an environment for future generations that is closer to the plan of the Creator."

In the aftermath of the Jubilee, John Paul II is addressing the way in which Christians must live their commitment in social life. He addressed the topic of ecology by reviewing biblical texts, beginning with Genesis, where God gives man dominion over nature, which is symbolized by the gesture of "naming" creatures.

The Pope pointed out that God did not make man an "autonomous despot" over nature but "a minister of the Kingdom of God, called to



CC FILES

Pope John Paul II

continue the work of the Creator, a work of life and peace."

"If one looks at the regions of our planet," he continued, "one realizes immediately that humanity has disappointed the divine expectation.... "Man has unhesitatingly devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted the waters, deformed the earth's habitat, made the air unbreathable, upset the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, blighted green spaces, implemented uncontrolled forms of industrialization, humiliating — to use an image of Dante Alighieri — the earth, that flower-bed that is our dwelling."

Given this situation, said John Paul, it is necessary to stimulate and support an "ecological conversion," which over the last few decades "has made humanity more sensitive when facing the catastrophe toward which it was moving."

"Not only is a 'physical' ecology at stake, attentive to safeguarding the habitat of different living beings, but also a 'human' ecology that will render the life of creatures more dignified."

He ended by inviting humanity to discover God in the beauty of creation, quoting a passage from the Jewish Hasidic tradition, which says: "You are wherever I go! You are wherever I stop ... wherever I turn, wherever I admire, only You, again You, always You."

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Guest Editorial

Pouring cold water on 'Christendom': *Walkerton as call to 'Christian politics'*

John L. Hiemstra

Christendom is dead in Canada. The first election of the new millennium confirms beyond a shadow of a doubt that most Canadians think the church should not be the conscience of the nation. They no longer believe Canada is a Christian society nor assume that our institutions and values rest on Christian foundations.

The verbal beating that Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day took at the hands of his campaign rivals and the national media verifies the death of Christendom. Simply for confessing Christ in politics, Day was ridiculed and even charged with intolerance.

Should Church vacate the public square?

As the church grasps the implications of post-Christendom society, some leaders are urging us to vacate the public square, retreat into our churches and Christian ministries, and devote our energies to evangelism.

"Let's admit the obvious," they say, "Canada is now a secular country. Christians lose far more public battles than we ever win, so let's put our effort into activities that really count."

This reaction is understandable. I certainly do not want to defend many aspects of Christendom. At best, it was a deeply flawed model of relating the Kingdom of God to public life. But does the demise of Christendom mean we should no longer work out a distinctly 'Christian' approach to politics?

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The recent drinking water disaster in Walkerton, Ontario shows that water is becoming an enormous political issue. I will use this issue to explore if 'Christian' politics is still possible!

Politics and Walkerton's water

Many Canadians think we have an unlimited supply of fresh water. The Walkerton disaster shows, however, that we share many of the world's serious water problems. Cattle manure carrying E. coli 157 bacteria contaminated the drinking water in the town, killing at least seven people and leaving hundreds of others seriously ill.

At first glance, it is not obvious that water is a political issue at all or that government should be responsible for providing and cleaning water.

In one way or another, we are all responsible for water. Each of us can help protect drinking water in our various roles in life, for example, by minimizing use in our homes, preventing waste in municipal water systems, not polluting our streams, lakes and water reservoirs, or by reducing waste in our businesses.

Ensuring the 'common good' of clean and safe water is a unique task of government. There is no principled reason, however, why government cannot hire a for-profit company to do this task. It can also do it by encouraging and enabling other non-profit agencies to provide drinking water. Or, government can fulfil its task by providing drinking water directly.

Government is called to do much more than this common good, however. It also creates the legal framework that publicly binds us together, integrating all citizens and institutions within one society. Government does this by legally recognizing and attaching appropriate public rights and obligations to each societal actor.

It is easy to grasp what this means for providing safe drinking water or treating waste water in Walkerton. The provincial government should have set more stringent guidelines for monitoring and treating water. It also should have enforced them far more rigidly, regardless of whether a public or for-profit agency operated the municipal water system.

It is more difficult to grasp what this means on a national level. Which government should reduce and eliminate pollution at its source? How do we ensure that adequate waste-water treatment plants are developed? Should the federal or provincial governments maintain and upgrade the country's existing water delivery and waste-water treatment infrastructure?

It is mind-boggling, however, to grasp how governments must deal with the many additional water problems facing us and the world today.

The tip of the iceberg

Walkerton is "just the tip of the iceberg," Leo Charbonneau argues in *University Affairs* (Dec. 2000). A variety of "stressors" threaten Canada's water simultaneously, including "global climate change, acid rain, increased UVB radiation, airborne toxins, invasion of our water by foreign aquatic species, and human and animal waste." Other countries face additional problems, such as, overpopulation, deforestation, desertification, and shifting weather patterns

When governments address these complicated questions, they need to untangle a host of inter-related social responsibilities and functions. Which human activities cause these stressors? Which institutions or actors generate them? How do we link up to these actors in our everyday callings, e.g. consumers, citizens, producers, workers, or farmers?

If illegitimate activities produce stressors, how can the appropriate actors be called to responsibility? If legitimate activities produce stressors, how can they be harmonized and balanced with other legitimate ecological and human needs? How can farms, industry, transportation, eco-systems, and cities function side-by-side so all thrive and achieve their purposes while not fouling the nest for others?

Thank God, it is government's calling to discern power imbalances, to detect who lacks the resources needed to fulfil their callings, to discover who is acting irresponsibly, and to identify which institutions and persons are oppressing others. Government is given coercive authority (Rm. 13) to harmonize and reconcile public conflicts in our extremely complex, inter-related global society.

Christian water politics

There is no clear separation of regenerate and unregenerate in water issues. Yet, neither can we address water issues as though they are simply problems of self-interest, neutral rationality, or technical expertise. We cannot resolve these problems without invoking our beliefs about human nature, sin, redemption, responsibility, fairness, hope, or love for neighbor.

The Bible tells us that the gospel is already active in politics whether or not we acknowledge it! Jesus goes before us to redeem our whole existence and to point reality back to God. The call for a 'Christian' politics, therefore, is simply the call to follow Jesus as he redeems all of life.

We can see the influence of the gospel in politics when we understand that the heart of the gospel is love (Mt 22:37-9, Mk12:30-1, Lk 10:27). Love is not some command that Christians get to impose on the unregenerate. Rather, it is the way God calls each of us to relate to him, each other, and creation.

The apostle John tells us that God so loved the entire *cosmos*, that he gave his one and only Son to redeem it and us (3:16-17). We should steward water simply because God made it!

Water is also a good gift to living creatures. God deliberately created us as bodily creatures that depend on water. We use it for drinking, cooking, bathing, cleaning, recreation, transportation, farming, industry, and even baptism. We share the need for clean and safe water with the animals and plants. We should steward water simply because it is a gift of God to living creatures.

The gospel of love (1 Cor. 13) urges us to widen our consideration of water politics to include our neighbor's good, especially weak and needy creatures. Love does not allow us to see water as a resource to plunder, a commodity to horde, or as cesspool to fill. Love liberates us from survival of the fittest politics. It keeps us away from the politics of self-interest. Love gives us the will to serve, a desire for peace and justice, and hope for the renewed creation when Christ returns.

The tears, pain and anger of Walkerton cry out for the politics of love. All the water 'stressors' of the world wait to be "brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8:18-26). Christendom may be dead in Canada, but the gospel call to Christian politics is alive and well.

Dr. John L. Hiemstra is Associate Professor of Political Studies at The King's University College, in Edmonton, Alberta

Tim Antonides responds to his critics

My Dec. 25 column was strongly worded and expressed my frustration at the heresy of the success gospel. It's unfortunate that the words "nauseatingly slick" and "drivel" hurt some feelings. They were not used to make a personal attack but to reflect my indignation.

At no time, did I disparage those who publicly declare their faith in Christ. In fact, I called it "refreshing" to see athletes declare that their athletic gifts come from the Lord and that they give praise to him for these gifts. What I did criticize was success theology — the public declaration that believing in Jesus is a one-way ticket to worldly success and fortune. This is precisely the message that some Christian professional athletes give and it's one that the Schullers have been broadcasting for decades. Out of curiosity, I've been watching "The Hour of Power" off-and-on for some 15 years now — from Robert Sr.'s "Be Happy Attitudes" interpretation of the Beatitudes (perhaps the most compelling statement of humility and servanthood in all of Scripture) to the endless parade of wealthy businesspeople, celebrities, and professional athletes who've made it big thanks to God. The programs I referred to in the article were just two examples of the many I've seen.

A dangerous business

This is a dangerous business and goes to the heart of our narcissistic times. Yes, success is a wonderful thing. Obviously, some are more financially blessed than others in order that they may respond with gratitude, such as giving generously to Christian schools and other organizations. May we all be able to use our God-given talents to succeed unendingly. That's not what the Schullers and other (even worse) televangelists are selling, though. They've developed a nice mix of New Age humanism and orthodoxy. Along with the "trust in the Lord and live out his will" gospel comes a not-too-subtle promise of worldly wealth and **me**-based success. It's easy to see why this stuff sells like hotcakes. Who wouldn't want to save their soul and get rich at the same time? Attractive.

In similar discussions, some always argue, "Yes, but I know someone who was brought to Christ by this ministry, so..." We can be grateful that God uses broken things to reveal his saving message. Does that mean that we blindly accept all the ideas that the human vehicle of that message puts forward? How did the benchmark of obedience to God become the size of our ministries rather than the truthfulness of our witness?

The Schullers have a successful ministry, so somehow we "sit on our hands" and pretend that everything's okay. After all, they publicly condemn abortion and other moral outrages. Perhaps, as Mr. Kloet suggests, we should embrace such figures (I presume he refers to Stockwell Day) who pronounce their faith publicly. It seems to me, though, that the substance of the faith they live out and share with others is more important than the magnitude of the publicity they generate. The Schullers sell worldly success. It seems that's beyond reproach, though, because they're "flagships."

Theology of success is a heresy

This theology of success is a heresy every bit as harmful as the liberalism of the previous era. It's shocking to see such a lack of discernment among some members of the CRC in this regard.

Mr. Janssens suggests a Schuller book that might help me with my work with young people. Mr. Kloet expresses his concern about the youth of today. He shares his alarm at the number of youth leaving our churches and suggests that internal fighting, worship style, and content are to blame. Although I only have 32 years of "life experience," I've spent the past 10 years teaching young people. They're not leaving the church so much for these reasons as they are because of hypocrisy. They're living in the darkest times imagineable — a postmodern age that tells them everything is truthful and meaningless at the same time. They're cynical of the motives behind some who share the gospel. Many have had their fill of adults who claim to love the Lord but who don't have the time or interest to get involved with young people, include them in their worship services, or show a radical, subversive faith that refuses to be spoon-fed by the popular culture. Instead, what they often see is short-sightedness and a lack of understanding of the spiritual forces at work in their culture — role models who are comfortably entrenched in modernism.

Rediscovering the true Lord

All the Crystal Cathedrals in the world can't mask the central heresy here. Many are accepting this gospel because the Schullers (and others) promise a lot of worldly goodies. If those blessings don't appear in the immediately tangible way they would like, I pray that such converts will rediscover the true Lord who offers a bountiful treasure beyond imagination.

In the latest issue of *Christianity Today*, quarterback Trent Dilfer of the Baltimore Ravens (the Super Bowl bound Baltimore Ravens), offers some great insights into this issue. Although at the top of the success echelon, Dilfer points out his feelings on the success syndrome and how God uses success in our lives: "Are my motives to become faithful so that I'll be rewarded in football, or are my motives to be faithful so I'll just continue to trust him?" He points out that a false assumption is spreading through the NFL that "the more successful I can be, the more I can glorify God, because now I can show the world that I serve a powerful God who can give me victory and great circumstances and blessing where he's not giving it to others. But as I search God's Word, I don't see Him saying that."

I don't see it either.

Tim Antonides
Surrey, B.C.

People Power II brings down Philippine President Estrada

AP PHOTO/BULLIT MARQUEZ

New Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo prays during a Jan. 22 service at Manila Cathedral.

CC Staff

Encouraged by their priests and ministers, thousands of Filipinos took to the streets Jan. 16 to protest the government's attempt to cover up the misdeeds of President Joseph Estrada. By the next day, the crowd gathered at a historic shrine in the capital had grown to over 200,000, demanding the removal of the president.

'Stay here and keep watch'

The Philippines most influential religious leader, Cardinal Jaime Sin, told the crowd: "Stay here until all evil is conquered by good and all corruption is conquered by integrity. Stay here and keep watch."

The Couples of Christ, a Catholic organization, placed full-page ads in the newspapers entitled "Guilty" which called all patriotic Filipinos to a vigil at the shrine until Estrada resigned.

The Senate, convened to impeach the president, had voted not to admit in evidence documents it had in hand allegedly proving he was guilty of bribery, graft, corruption and other offenses. Estrada has reportedly been leading the life of a playboy, fathering illegitimate children with different women and turning cabinet meetings into drinking parties. He is also accused of funnelling over 60 million dollars into secret accounts.

The senate's action prompted leaders of both Catholic and Protestant churches to call for protests. The bishops of the United Church of Christ charged senators with suppressing the truth and said they had "lost their moral right to remain in the hallowed halls of the Senate."

Cardinal Sin called on all Catholic members of the government to resign. "How can you face God and sleep at night and support this immoral president?" he asked.

The massive demonstrations resembled those that removed Ferdinand Marcos from office in 1986 and were dubbed "People Power II." Protest marches were organized in all the major cities and within a couple of days millions had taken to the streets.

By the weekend, the military and many leaders had joined the crowds, while many of Estrada's former cronies had vanished.

Estrada himself was hiding in the presidential palace, and Vice-president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, one of the first leaders to join the crowds at the shrine, had taken over as the country's new leader and commander-in-chief.

Always eager for a hero, Filipinos began to call their new leader "Super Gloria." She vowed to bring Estrada to justice.

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Fight against child poverty far from over

COURTESY DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK

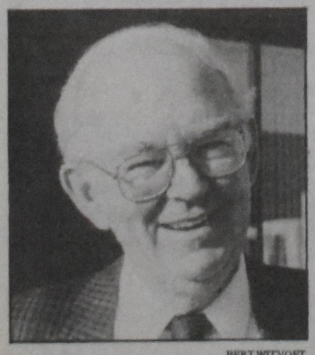
Volunteers work at Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank. Last March, 726,902 Canadians received emergency groceries.

Margaret Dinsdale

TORONTO — Over 100 faith leaders gathered in Toronto on January 16 to underline their commitment to the fight against child poverty in Canada. With a new parliament about to sit and the upcoming Throne Speech, the Campaign Against Child Poverty (CACP), which sponsored the event, had drafted an open letter to the Prime Minister and will be monitoring the Throne Speech for signs that Jean Chretien will follow up on his December declaration that the government should "keep spending money on children so they can get a good start in life."

They also announced a full-page ad that appeared in the *Toronto Star* on January 19.

Despite a unanimous resolution by the House of Commons in 1989 to eliminate child poverty in Canada by 2000, statistics reveal a different trend. The number of poor children has increased by 43 per cent, and almost 40 per cent of food bank recipients are under the age of 18. Food bank usage has also increased. In March 2000, 726,902 Canadians received emergency groceries, almost double the numbers of 1989.



BERT WITVOET

Gerald Vandezande

Gerald Vandezande, a volunteer spokesperson with CACP, gave the keynote address, in which he said that every faith group has "fundamental values" that require action against the "obscenity of child and family poverty."

Worsening plight of children

"We are increasingly confronted with the worsening plight of voiceless children and vulnerable families who are trying to survive in our beloved Canada — possibly the wealthiest country in the world.... We are all familiar with the bitter reality of the depressing numbers of defenceless citizens who are poor, hungry and homeless."

Leaders from Jewish, United Church of Canada and Roman Catholic communities also spoke at the meeting and urged participants to sign the letter which urges the government to undertake five initiatives, which include a social investment fund for children in cooperation with the voluntary sector, a comprehensive child benefit system for low and modest income families, early childhood development services and day care, affordable housing, and the restoration of provincial transfer payments to pre-1995 levels with accountability to spending in certain areas such as welfare and post-secondary education.

Membership in CACP, includes B'nai Brith Canada, Canadian Association of Food Banks, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Citizens for Public Justice, Family Service Association of Toronto, Jewish Family and Child Service, MAZON Canada, Campaign 2000, The United Church of Canada, and United Way of Greater Toronto.

They also acknowledged many faith communities that help care for children such as the Christian Reformed Church in North America (Canada), the Canadian Council of Churches, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism and many others.

Vandezande was overjoyed that on January 19, CACP received a letter from the Prime Minister's Office. Though Chretien was in Jamaica for meetings, an official wrote: "I would like to assure you that our government looks forward to continuing to work with organizations such as the Campaign Against Child Poverty to ensure a high quality of life for all of Canada's children."

"This is a matter of conscience," Vandezande said in an interview. "I am never politically partisan except to the poor, just as Jesus was, is and always will be."

But he also said that he wants to hear from the Prime Minister directly, that he will keep his commitment to social justice that he declared after the federal election. During his speech, Mr. Vandezande urged pressure on the government.

"The question is: Will we act now? Will we urge Ottawa to act now? Will we, as faith-filled citizens, urge our governments to show the political will to help launch the radical renewal needed to restore human dignity to the many Canadians who are now being marginalized?"

Does your church have an environmental lightning rod?

Creation waits...
John Wood

Lightning rods are an essential feature on most tall buildings. The early ones had an ungainly look, a plain rod jutting skyward. But I saw a delightful device last summer on an older church. It was woven into a lacey ornamental lattice surrounding the steeple. Someone had creatively joined form and function at this spot. The steeple artfully pointed all toward the master's abode, while offering protection from disaster. We seldom see lightning rods today because they are designed discreetly into the outline of the structure. But they are always up there doing their protective task. Today there are leaders in the church who are constructing environmental lightning rods to help us all. We might want to pay attention to what they are doing.

A Catholic lightning rod

The most recent example in Canada is the Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops of the Columbia River Watershed (see Alan Doerksen's article on page 1). This three-year effort has resulted in a landmark document on *Caring for Creation and the Common Good.* It is not a technical document, but rather a "spiritual reflection" that offers the 1.8 million Catholics of the region a set of "guiding principles".

Bishop William Sklystad of Spokane says the letter "calls people to good stewardship, to a sense of justice and a vision for the future." That sounds to me like a good formula for avoiding environmental disaster. There is a growing sense in the Pacific Northwest that the Columbia River is in trouble. The problems have not developed overnight, but stem from decisions that have been accumulating for decades. And like an afternoon thunder storm these decisions can suddenly release a catastrophic discharge. For some sectors of this biotic, hydrologic, economic, and cultural community, it has already happened. Without biblical principles to guide them, Christians are left voiceless and defenseless in the storm.

A river as sacramental commons

The eight bishops who began this effort were not what anyone would call "environmentalist" in their outlook. But that may have changed in the process of consulting with the people of the watershed. In a time-consuming and sometimes tense process they listened carefully to what people were saying about the state of the river. And by focusing on the river they discovered that it became a "sacramental commons" for them. On this view, the river is something that helps humans connect to the divine. Could it be that the creation, viewed in this way, is a sufficiently large and comprehensive subject to pull us together in dialogue?

I have often wondered why it is that so many people take such a narrow view of God's creative wonders. We seem to settle for mere debates about beginnings or about processes. As this letter shows, there is much more that we, and the rest of society, need to hear about the biblical basis for caring for creation.

Caring for creation

That phrase "caring for creation" is new in Christian thought in the last decade or so. It may be familiar to the CC readers, but it is largely absent from the wider dialogue in the Church. A diverse group of theologians and scientists are trying hard to change that fact. But they have a very large task. In a new book, *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action* (InterVarsity Press, 2000) editor R.J. Berry puts it this way: "There has not been — nor is there — any general agreement about Christian commitment on priorities or actions about creation care." After several decades of effort, this is a chilling conclusion, and a stirring call to Christians to take action. A first step is to read and reflect upon "The Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation." This book starts that process.

Expressing our love

We can no longer rely on the voices of a few scientists and theologians scattered among the various Protestant traditions. What is being contested here is a new way of being Christians in our world today. The older models, like the lightning rods of the past, served us well. But they are distorted and need renewal. As the famous English preacher, and expert bird watcher, John Stott puts it, "God intends...our care of the creation to reflect our love for the Creator." The Bishops and these authors, among others, are challenging us to find new ways of expressing our love of God today. May the Holy Spirit energize us through these lightning rods for our generation.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

Film Review

Action and romance spice up epic Chinese movie

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Rated: ***PG-13****. Stars: Michelle Yeoh, Zhang Ziyi, Chow Yun Fat, Cheng Pei Pei.*
Directed by Ang Lee
Reviewed by Alan Doerksen

Zhang Ziyi, who plays Jen, is a relative newcomer to the film world, but often upstages her co-stars in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.

Although filmed in Chinese with English subtitles, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is quickly becoming a hit in North America. Its combination of action and romance have struck a chord with filmgoers and critics, some of whom compare the epic adventure to the *Star Wars* series.

The movie is set in historical China, and features some beautiful panoramic shots of the Gobi Desert and Chinese mountains. The adventure begins with a noble warrior, Li Mu Bai (played by Chow Yun Fat), deciding to retire from the warrior life, because he has received some sort of enlightenment. He is also abandoning his commitment to avenge the death of his martial arts master, who was killed by Jade Fox (Cheng Pei Pei). Visiting the home of his unrequited love, Yu She Lien (Michelle Yeoh), he asks her to give his ancient sword, called Green Destiny, to his friend Sir Te (Lung Sihung), in Beijing, as a sign of respect.

Sword and movie stolen

Yu travels to Sir Te's home and offers him the sword. But that's when the trouble begins and the action starts. One night, a masked bandit steals the sword, and escapes over the rooftops, with Yu in hot pursuit. Much of the plot after this involves attempts by Li, Yu and others to recover the sword.

One character who almost steals the movie is Jen (Zhang Ziyi), a young woman also visiting the home of Sir Te. Jen is pledged by her parents to be married to a man she doesn't care for. Her parents are trying to tame her by teaching her proper manners, dress and calligraphy, but deep down, Jen is a rebel. She seems naive at first, as she expresses her admiration for Yu, whose warrior exploits she has heard about. Yu advises her to go ahead and get married, rather than take up the difficult life of a warrior.

But later on, Jen shows her true colors as she allies herself with Jade Fox, battling against Li and Yu, and proves to be a formidable fighter. But her romantic side is shown in a compelling flashback scene, in which she is kidnapped by a desert warrior known as Dark Cloud, with whom she develops an unlikely romance. Later on, Dark Cloud comes to look for her in Beijing, hoping to win back her heart before she is married. All the romantic scenes are subtly done, and unlikely to offend many viewers.

Unexpressed love

Another romantic subplot involves Li and Yu. Although they care for each other, neither one is comfortable expressing their feelings for each other, partly because of their personal history together. This is rather like the story of Cyrano de Bergerac, the brave swordsman who also had problems expressing his romantic feelings for the woman he loved. Sir Te sums things up when he says, "When it comes to emotions, even great heroes can be idiots."

Besides the romance, there is plenty of action in this movie, including sword fights and martial arts battles. Some of these scenes are suspenseful and gripping, but others are unintentionally funny, as characters soar through treetops and over roofs, unencumbered by gravity. Special wiring enables the stars to defy gravity. But if this were done more smoothly and believably, it might have been more compelling.

Not overly violent

Unlike some martial arts movies, there is very little blood in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Battle scenes are dramatic, but not overly violent. One scene, involving a barroom battle, is actually funny, as Jen fends off a foe while trying not to spill her cup of tea.

For North Americans, following this movie's subtitles can be a bit of a chore, but, fortunately, the action scenes are virtually free of subtitles.

Underscoring the movie is a quality soundtrack, featuring haunting cello solos from Yo Yo Ma. Bittersweet Chinese-style music helps to set the mood for the story.

Subtle elements of Taoism

Ang Lee, director of the movie, infuses it with subtle elements of the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism. But this is almost unnoticeable in the movie, which focuses more on action and romance. Values which the movie does explore a bit more are loyalty and a sense of duty to friends and family.

Lee is best known for directing *The Ice Storm*, a 1997 story of a dysfunctional family in Watergate-era Connecticut; and 1995's *Sense and Sensibility*, an adaptation of Jane Austen's novel of the same name, which earned a Best Picture Oscar nomination.

Zhang Ziyi, who plays Jen, is a relative newcomer to the film world. *Crouching Tiger* is her third movie, but her acting skill shines through, and she often upstages her co-stars.

Chow Yun Fat, who plays Li, is a very popular actor in Asia, especially in action movies. But he broke that mold recently when he co-starred with Jodie Foster in *Anna and the King* as the King of Siam. In *Crouching Tiger*, his brooding seriousness is a good contrast to the brash attitude of Jen.

Michelle Yeoh, who portrays Yu, has become a popular international actress in action movies, although she had an earlier career as a ballerina, training at England's Royal Academy of Dance. She caught the attention of North American filmgoers when she was cast opposite Pierce Brosnan in the 1997 James Bond movie *Tomorrow Never Dies*. She portrays Yu with a sad intensity reflecting her unrequited love for Li. But she is also quick with a sword or a well-placed kick.

The action scenes in *Crouching Tiger* will appeal to some young people, and to martial arts fans, but other viewers might find them too melodramatic and unrealistic. The romantic and atmospheric aspects of the movie will appeal more to adults.

EFC publishes helpful resource on child porn problem

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has published a discussion paper which can serve as a helpful resource for Christians concerned about the effects of child pornography on children.

EFC's Social Action Commission recently published *Innocence Preserved: Protecting Children from Child Pornography* so as to encourage dialogue within the evangelical community. This 31-page booklet, which is available free from EFC, explores the effects of child pornography on children, paedophiles and society and explains what Canada's Criminal Code and recent court cases say about it. Two sections which concerned Christians will find valuable are those asking "What is a Christian approach?" and "How can we respond?"

Taboo slowly breaking down

The booklet warns that our society is becoming desensitized to sexual sin, which could result in a public acceptance of sex with children as normal. "A postmodern approach to sexual activity allows people to act in any way they choose," states the booklet. "There are no boundaries and there is no authority which can deny one's choice. Sexual activity with children is one of the last taboos and this is slowly breaking down. This belief that we make our own truth and are a law to ourselves, taken to its logical extension, would allow the consumption of child pornography and sex with children."

In response, the booklet asserts, "As Christians, we must not become so deadened to sexual sin that we neglect our responsibility to protect children and to seek appropriate legal and societal treatment of them."

Taking action

A Christian approach to this issue involves care for the vulnerable, especially children. Christians should also protect human dignity — treating people as persons, not as sexual objects — and uphold family integrity, understanding that the place of wholesome sexuality is in the context of marriage.

EFC suggests concerned Christians respond to the problem of child pornography in a variety of ways, as individuals and churches. For instance, as individuals Christians can pray for the good of the country, avoid temptation, and take part in community awareness projects. As citizens, they can communicate concerns about child porn to provincial and federal representatives, urging them to uphold the current child pornography law and seek further regulation of the Internet.

As consumers, Christians can stop shopping at stores which sell sexually explicit materials and let owners know the reason. As parents, they can monitor what children watch on TV and on the Internet. And as churches, they can address the issue in small groups or through sermons.

Good discussion-starter

This booklet can be a good discussion-starter to help Christians deal with an uncomfortable topic in positive ways.

Interested individuals and churches can order this booklet from EFC for no charge except a voluntary donation by writing to: The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Attn: Child Pornography Booklet Offer, M.I.P. Box 3745, Markham, ON L3R 0Y4.

Indonesian Christians being forced to convert to Islam

Alex Buchan

LONDON (Compass) — Alarmed by mounting evidence from evacuees that perhaps as many as a thousand Protestant and Catholic Christians on the islands of Kesui and Teor were forcibly converted to Islam, often involving painful circumcisions, leaders of the Maluku churches again issued an emergency appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations to prevent further coercion.

BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO BY WARREN F. JOHNSON

Driven from their homes by Muslim radicals, Christian refugees pause to worship at Elim Church in Ambon City, Indonesia, in spite of their distress. Many refugees have testified that the power of God's love keeps them from hating their persecutors.

International security forces needed

"The most urgent actual need, which should have priority, is the presence of international security forces, international and independent survey and investigation teams to restore law and order and respect for human rights," the Christian leaders stated in a December 15 appeal.

According to the Crisis Centre of Ambon — a Roman Catholic monitoring agency — "a total of 615 Catholics and some hundreds of Protestants" were coerced into becoming Muslims when 2,000 Islamic militants attacked villages in the islands of Kesui and Teor between November 23 and December 11.

The Centre revealed there were a total of 1,533 Catholics living on the two islands, and 619 remain in hiding in the forest or are unaccounted for, with a further 200 fleeing to another island. Reliable statistics for the Protestant community are not available.

A government investigation team in mid December evacuated a total of 172 people, and the refugees have been telling their stories in Ambon. Some witnesses told of Muslim extremists arriving on the island as far back as September who said, "We will attack your village if you do not convert."

Two Protestants killed for not converting

"Once the news got around the island that two Protestant teachers on December 1— E. Rumatora and David Balubun — had been killed for refusing to convert, we were all very scared," said an unidentified refugee.

Others claimed that when they came out of the forest after the fighting they were taken to mosques and told, "By order of the jihad, now that you have come down from the woods, this means you have to embrace Islam. If you are not willing to do this, we have to separate you from the others, and you will be killed."

Some told of crude circumcision rites inexpertly performed with razor blades on women as well as men.

At first the governor of Maluku, Saleh Latuconsinua, a Muslim, refused to admit forced conversions had taken place. He sent a freighter on December 1 with security officials on board, but they merely talked to jihad fighters who said no one wanted to be evacuated.

An investigation team sent December 10-11 interviewed a few villagers but could not find anyone who admitted to being forced to convert. But the one Christian on the team, a Catholic priest named Fr. Binsasi, said, "No one was prepared to talk to the investigating team in front of the Muslim fighters. There was no privacy."

Christians fear reprisal

Another team was sent December 13, and they managed to interview some of the "converted" Christians in the privacy of the boat. Many poured out their stories, though not all wished to leave families behind for fear of reprisal, so "only 147 Catholics and 18 Protestants were evacuated." On their return, the governor admitted forced conversions had indeed taken place.

This is not the first time forced conversions have taken place in the two-year-old war in Maluku in eastern Indonesia. But the Kesui and Teor incidents are unique in their scale.

"Never before have so many at one time been forced to convert," said a Catholic priest.

On December 19, a day of fasting and prayer was observed by the 21 denominations represented in Maluku. On December 23, 500 church leaders led a public protest in Ambon city against the forced conversions and handed a petition to the governor.

However, Laskar Jihad — the Muslim extremist force roaming around Maluku — released their version of events via their website. They claim that the Christians wish to create a separate state, that the church is the "political tool of the separatists," and that the Christian aim is to "annihilate all Muslim people in Maluku."

This was dismissed as "propaganda," even by the Indonesian government.

But church leaders warned against unhelpful exaggeration of Christian suffering by some foreign organizations. The Crisis Centre of Ambon refused to sign an appeal issued by the "Australian Peace Committee" which claimed that "23,000 Indonesian soldiers backed by 30,000 Laskar Jihad mercenaries were waging full scale war, with 40,000 killed so far."

Said Fr. C.J. Bohm of the Crisis Centre, "We very much appreciate the world's concern but are not helped by such exaggerations, which, of course, will simply be put aside by those addressed, since they are too clever to believe such nonsense."

The December 15 appeal letter from Maluku church leaders was to be sent to Mrs. Mary Robinson, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. Reliable sources indicate that between 4,000-5,000 people have been killed in the fighting, and around 180,000 have been displaced.

Religious leaders in Britain unite against human cloning law

LONDON, Eng. (ZENIT.org) — Eleven religious leaders of different faiths have joined forces in an unprecedented campaign to halt the legalization of human cloning by the House of Lords next week, the *Telegraph* reported today.

The archbishops of Canterbury and York joined the Catholic archbishops of Westminster and Glasgow, as well as Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Baptist and evangelical leaders, to urge that the move be postponed, the newspaper said. Their united campaign follows four failed attempts to discuss the moral and ethical issues of cloning with Prime Minister Tony Blair. Downing Street said that "diary commitments" made a meeting impossible.

Complex questions raised

It is the first time that the faith leaders have overcome their differences to intervene in a political issue they regard as morally dubious, the London newspaper said. In a letter to all members of the House of Lords today, they claim that "the philosophical and ethical implications" of cloning have not been fully considered, it noted.

Their letter argues that "complex questions" raised by human embryo cloning cannot be addressed in a brief parliamentary debate and should be referred to a select committee. With an election in the spring it is unlikely that the measure would return to Parliament under the Blair government.

The cloning issue was due to come before the Lords as a free vote Jan. 21 and, if accepted, would make it permissible to clone human embryos for therapeutic use. The Catholic archbishop of Glasgow, Scotland, Cardinal Thomas Winning has been the most outspoken on the issue, noting that "therapeutic cloning" is a misnomer for "killing."

Atheists in Russia a 'repressed minority'

(Religion Today) — Atheists are feeling sorry for themselves in the former Soviet Union. A tenet of communist ideology, atheism practically was the official religion during the Soviet era but is seen as disreputable since the regime collapsed, according to *The Observer*, a British newspaper. About 55 per cent of Russia's population now profess to be Russian Orthodox Christians and less than five per cent say they are atheists, the newspaper reported.

Atheists believe they are a "repressed minority" in an increasingly religious culture, the *Observer* reported. "We are witnessing a wholesale attack on the secular state, with religious indoctrination appearing in every key area of life," Lev Levinson of the Moscow Society for Atheists told the *Observer*. He cited the country's new national anthem, which calls Russia a "holy country" that is "protected by God," the fact that Orthodoxy is taught in secondary schools, and the military's practice of allowing priests to instruct new converts in the faith.

Russian Orthodoxy has become "the de facto state religion — to the exclusion of all other convictions," Levinson said. He formed the Moscow Society for Atheists to prevent the growing influence the church has over government, he said, but Moscow city officials recently refused the group's request to be registered as a legitimate body.

From generation to generation

Chapter & Verse

Mary S. Hulst Antonides

"One generation will laud your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts."
Psalm 145:4

My grandfather died last September.

My grandfather was one of those grandfathers for whom Hallmark cards are made. He was a handy man, who fixed the tire on my bike more times than I can remember. He had a quick wit, and could pull your leg for most of a conversation before you realized that he was joking. He loved to play games, especially card games, and was very, very good. In high school he was a scrappy basketball player who earned the nickname "Powerhouse," but you would never hear that from him. Other people of his era would tell those stories, while he would sit in his chair, a playful smile dancing around his lips.

I miss him.

The house felt empty

This was our first Christmas without him. The house was full of grandchildren and even great-grandchildren, but it felt empty. We missed him. We missed his warm eyes watching us open our gifts, and the tender way he would hold the little ones. We missed his puns and his laugh. We missed his quiet, steady presence. We missed him.

He died on September 25, two days after my birthday. He had been battling lymphoma, and we had all watched as the 85-year-old body, which only last winter had pushed a snowblower around the driveway, now withered away, becoming frail. For the first time, he looked old.

He and my grandmother had asked me to officiate at their funerals. They had asked months before, before the diagnosis, before the treatment, before the thought of either of their dying seemed near. I had said yes, of course.

Hardest, most wonderful thing to do

He had thoughtfully chosen Scripture texts, songs, a solo. My task was to write a prayer of thanksgiving for his life, and, of course, the funeral message. It was the hardest and most wonderful thing I think I have ever had to do. It was made easier, ironically, after spending a few hours in the funeral home. Person after person came by, stories were told, jokes were shared. I realized, the way I think grandchildren do as they become adults, that this man wasn't just my grandpa. He was a church member, a friend, an encourager. For 30 years he had worked at Chris-Craft, building boats. For another stretch he served as a janitor at a public elementary school. He never held church office, he never spoke in public, he never sought the spotlight. And yet he touched so many lives. So many people came with tears in their eyes as they talked about how he had helped them when they needed help, how he has served without regard for gain, how he had gotten balls and frisbees off the roof of the school again and again and again.

A quiet, steady, shalom-marked life

My grandpa, who had always been big in my eyes, became larger than life. What I came away with, and what I tried to communicate in the message at his funeral, was that how he lived — this quiet, steady, shalom-marked life — was a direct result of being a man of faith. His faith marked him; more than that — it colored him. You could not see him without seeing his faith. But it wasn't a bright red or purple, his faith glowed a warm amber. It drew people in. Non-churched people came to see us, lapsed Catholic neighbors talked with us. CRC folk who had left for more right-leaning congregations were there.

Grandpa would have been humbled, almost embarrassed by what people said. He shook off compliments like raindrops, and if he were to read this, his eyes would fill with tears and he would shake his head. He wouldn't say much, but you would get the impression that he would have thought my writing a bit over the top.

And maybe it is.

But when a person lives his life in gratitude for what God in Christ has done for him, and in this way models for his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren what living by faith is all about, and when you have the precious gift of having this person as your grandfather, I think you are allowed a bit of an indulgence.

And with the indulgence comes a responsibility. My grandfather's life and death and new life in Christ remind me, challenge me, encourage me to live as he did: ever more in the imitation of Jesus Christ, ever more marked by the warm glow of faith.

Thanks, Grandpa, for pointing me always to the Son.

Rev. Mary S. Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Plantinga nominated for seminary presidency

CC Staff

GRAND RAPIDS — The Presidential Nominating Committee of the Calvin Theological Seminary Board of Trustees announces with great joy and gratitude to God that it has nominated Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., to become the sixth president of Calvin Theological Seminary.

After interview by the seminary faculty, Dr. Plantinga will be presented to the full board for its approval at its meeting on February 8, 2001. His nomination will then be presented to the Board of Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America for its endorsement. The nomination will be submitted to Synod 2001.

CC FILES

Dr. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

Plantinga, himself a graduate of Calvin College and Seminary, earned his PhD From Princeton in 1982. He has been serving as Prof. of Systematic Theology at Calvin Seminary and also as the first Dean of the Chapel for Calvin College. His book, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, was named the book of the year by *Christianity Today* in 1996. He has written several other books that make Reformed teachings not only accessible but also a spur to devotion.

Christians open assembly in Colombia with prayer for peace

BARRANQUILLA, Colombia (ENI) — Lifting candles high in a prayer for peace in this war-torn land, hundreds of Protestant and Evangelical church leaders from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean opened a five-day conference here in mid-January. The opening worship celebration of the Fourth General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) took place in a basketball stadium in the centre of this Colombian port city. More than 2000 local Christians joined almost 500 assembly participants for the three-hour service. The assembly theme, "Free to Construct Peace", is especially relevant in Colombia, where a bloody civil war between government troops, leftist guerrilla groups, and a right-wing paramilitary army has brought continual violence to this country.

Our *daughter* knows we have everything we need. That's important to us.

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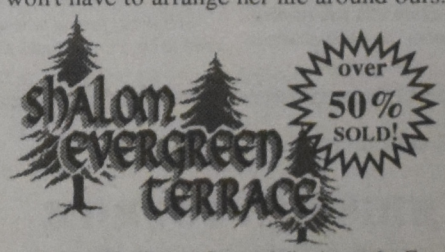

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Reflection/Psychology

The God of sleep

Karen Vaux

In the struggle to fill a void, K.J. Vaux has a small epiphany.

Sleeping is the greatest act of faith.

I wasn't thinking about this when I sold my bed. I wasn't thinking about anything — not even about selling it. I had mentioned something in passing to my cousin about maybe replacing it with a futon, and the next thing I knew there was a Chinese couple at my door inquiring about the size and price.

Seeing that huge empty space next to the window made me feel released from something I hadn't really felt trapped by.

They looked at the bed. They pulled up the sheets and tested the springs. They sat on it. They laid on it.

They talked to each other in Mandarin. They asked the price. They bargained. We agreed on $40. They wanted to take it with them right then.

I paused and listened to something faint in my head. Something about not having another bed, something about not really wanting to sell this one. But it was so faint, not even a formed idea; there was no sense that I was about to do something I shouldn't.

I looked at them, felt a smile spread across my face, and said "Sure. Take it now."

After wrapping it in the plastic bag it came in, they fastened long nylon straps around it. The man slipped his shoulders between the mattress and the straps and lifted it onto his back. I saw my camera on the shelf, and strangely, felt I wanted to remember this. I snapped a picture of a strange man in my bedroom, my bed strapped to his back, and his wife standing next to him. He waved for the camera. She smiled. I laughed.

They thanked me as they left, and I thanked them.

I looked at the cash in my hand. I had no idea what to do with it. I sat down, and tried to think about what I had just done. I didn't know what, or why, or why I felt so darn happy.

It wasn't a bad bed. It was firm, it smelled clean. But seeing that huge empty space next to the window made me feel released from something I hadn't really felt trapped by.

I swept the floor clean, and laid down a sleeping bag, some blankets, and a quilt on top. My new bed. The cat quickly nestled in. She approved.

A few hours later, a friend dropped by.

"What happened here?" she asked.

"I sold my bed."

"When?"

"Just a few hours ago."

"WHY?!" she gasped.

"I don't know why. I just did it."

I paused.

Maybe I didn't like sleeping alone in a double bed. Maybe it was a second settling-in, to my new apartment, to my new life. Maybe I wanted to try living without something I'd always thought was necessary. Maybe it had something to do with the sudden and strange void separating me from...

"I think," I said to her, "I think I'm working out something with God."

If you think about it, we spend nearly half our lives sleeping. And regardless of the beliefs or disbeliefs we go to bed with, we do so with the assumption that we will pass safely through these unconscious, vulnerable hours to awake alive and well. Whether we "believe" or not, we do when we sleep.

Standing, facing where my bed used to be, I found that I was facing the hard realities of my life: my family has broken up, I am still in pain when I walk, I am trying to make a new home in a strange city and country.

Maybe I created this physical void to mimic an internal one, to force me to find what I need to fill it. Maybe I fear that a faith so battered by these hard realities cannot possibly fill that void. And yet with my bed gone, I realize that God carries me through the night, regardless of what I sleep on, or with, or without.

Every night when I close my eyes I exercise my faith in a way I rarely do, or can, during the day. It is this passive faith that is a powerful fuel to an active one.

That night on the floor, I slept well.

HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

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We either get it or we don't

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

In the last few months various people brought to my attention a *New York Times* bestseller. Out of curiosity I finally visited our local mega-bookstore and spent some time browsing through the book while sinking comfortably into a soft and fluffy sofa. As usual, I promised myself I would not buy it. As usual, I bought it plus the accompanying workbook the author developed.

What attracted my attention was the story about Oprah in the introduction. Oprah and her battle at Amarillo, Texas, where she was facing civil charges of fraud, slander, defamation, and negligence. She was publicly accused of lying and manipulating the truth to sensationalize a story about Mad Cow disease in the beef industry, all allegedly to generate higher ratings. Her accusers were depicting her as a greedy, irresponsible betrayer of the truth.

Oprah unable to get unstuck

On camera Oprah continued to be high-spirited and self-assured during that time. But behind the scenes she was so stuck in her denial this could be happening to her as well as the unfairness of the whole situation, her lawyers were not able to work with her to develop an effective strategy for her defense. Finally, Phillip C. McGraw, author and life strategist had to challenge her to *wake up* and *get over* the unfairness of it and find out what she must do to win.

When she finally accepted she was in this situation, she became calmer. She did not run, settle or become intimidated but looked the judge and jury in the eyes and told them the truth. She then persuaded Phillip C. McGraw to write *Life Strategies: Doing what works, doing what matters*, so others can learn to get unstuck wherever they are in their lives.

We need to 'get it'

Last month I wrote about challenging ourselves to take *control* of our lives. Our next challenge needs to be to spend time *getting it*. McGraw is so convinced of its importance he lists it as the first of ten Life Laws we need to know. As an introduction to this life law he quotes a Decca Records executive who in 1962 said, "We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." And so, the executive rejected a contract with the Beatles. He did not "get it."

And so it is with knowledge about human nature. Those who take time to *get it* can enjoy the fruits of their knowledge. Those who don't, spend a lot of time feeling puzzled, helpless and frustrated. He writes: Once you truly understand how things really work, you can function from a position of knowledge, strength and confidence.

Life's greatest strategist

The kind of knowledge McGraw is writing about is that which defines and makes the difference between really living and just existing. It is about the skills we need to create a quality of life. It means learning how and why we do what we do, and don't do what we don't do; and how and why other people do what they do, and don't do. In short, it is all about developing effective and healthy interpersonal relationships.

McGraw is right, we need to *get it*. We have come through an era that put little or no emphasis on the art of healthy human functioning. Now is the time to put some effort into getting to know ourselves and others better. Not everyone has to see a life strategist or a therapist. Local schools and churches offer a variety of courses on human development. Encourage yourself to attend one. Why keep floundering in a sea of frustration and confusion? Especially when life's greatest Strategist would be more than happy to walk this road with us.

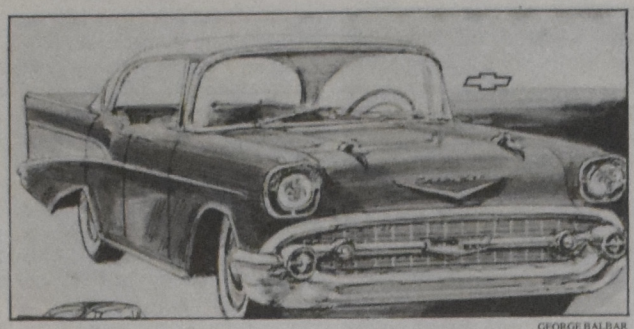
Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Living in the lap of luxury

Tymen Hofman

It might come as a bit of surprise for those who know me to read that I live in luxury. They know that I'm on U.S. Social Security and a Ministers' Pension add-on. Social Security is not that great and many CRC people are saying that our pension is really chintzy — lower than what the Christian School teachers get and a real cut below that of the Reformed Church in America.

Maybe I ought not to talk about my luxury. The committee studying how to raise our pensions might come back to synod and say there is no need for a raise, pointing to this issue of C.C. But I have a great urge to write about my luxurious life!



GEORGE BALBAR

To get the old Chevie going in cold weather, my Dad had to heat water on the stove and pour it into the radiator in order to warm the motor.

Waking up to luxury

I can start right where many of my writing ideas are spawned — in our queen-sized bed. What luxury! Soft, non-sagging and supportive, with a comfortable, light, feather-quilt, and two fine pillows to raise my head to the right level. I don't have to wind my alarm clock, but it always sends out soft music at the appointed hour of 7:20, inviting me to get up or to take my time while being entertained. I get up to a house that is well on the way to gaining the temperature level called for by the automatic thermostat. And I didn't have to turn it down before I went to bed. I don't have to worry about the furnace; the natural gas just keeps on flowing through the line. I only have to check the filter once a month so the house won't get dusty.

Then I flick on the light switch in a nice, warm, bathroom with a flush toilet, which never fails to deliver. I take about 90 seconds to shave with my trusty Norelco, which only needs recharging about every 18 days. Water always flows out of a fine Moen tap, which never drips, and in less than 20 seconds it's piping hot. And if I'm so minded, I take a shower with water at just the right temperature. Soap and shampoo is still a very decent buy at Meijers, and it is amazing just how long you can go with one bar.

I get dressed in a nice flannel shirt and Levi blue jeans that Cobi has hung in my closet after taking them out of an automatic washer and dryer and ironing them with an electric iron. Then I go to the kitchen and cook my porridge on an automatic gas-burner, and when I'm finished the dishes go into the dishwasher.

I find myself behind my trusty Power Macintosh and I command the ether waves and send my thoughts and messages to the far west, to Canada, to the Netherlands and England and Australia, and within a few hours I get word in return. What power, and luxury!

I never pay power or gas bills. They are all sent to my bank, which automatically pays them out of the account, which is kept replenished by my S.S. and pension cheques sent directly to the bank.

The envy of kings

If I choose to go out on an errand I tick the door control and the garage opens up. The remote on my key ring commands the doors of the twice-owned Bonneville we drive, and its lights go on when I start the motor. At night the lights stay on for a minute after I stop so I can find my way safely to the back door. I feel like a lord in charge of all I possess. What wouldn't an oriental king have given a century ago for such luxury!

Now I haven't always lived in luxury. I remember when I used to wake up in the morning to the rattle of my mother shaking the grate in the kitchen stove to remove the ashes of the previous day, before building a new fire. I still feel those bitterly cold Alberta mornings as I flew down the stairs in my underwear, hoping the stove would be giving off some heat to dress by.

The black chunks in the coal scuttle were from the supply which my Dad hauled about 20 miles from the Shaunessy mine by wagon. Every evening I'd make a trip to the coal shed to fill the bucket for the next day. That was a heavy load for a young guy of nine or ten years, but it beat lugging four or five pails of water from the well to the pig troughs. Especially when it was 20 below. Carrying out the ashes was much easier.

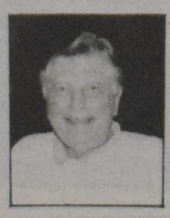
There was no running water in our house, and the kitchen stove served as the water heater. No flushing, of course. And the rendezvous with the outdoor toilet would take too many words to describe, except to say that the outdated Eaton catalogue was put to good use. No Charmin! Saturday was bath night which was also an ordeal in the round tub in the kitchen.

Life was a tough challenge

Cars had nothing automatic, not even a starter. No block heaters of course. To get the old Chevie going in cold weather, my Dad had to heat water on the stove and pour it into the radiator in order to warm the motor before there was any hope of getting it started. And so it was with almost every aspect of life — a tough challenge.

But I have mixed feelings about the luxury in which we all live. A large and important aspect of life is our memories, and the older we get the more important they are. In fact, it might be argued that all of life is a building of memories and a reward of a life well lived is a store of good memories. What a plague if all our memories were bad ones, of sin and failure and brokenness and challenges never met. Should you ask me if I'd trade my memories of "those good old times" for the luxury of today, I'd turn you down in a flash.

When I project just a bit and ask what kinds of memories my grandkids will take with them into their 70s, I see wall to wall comfort and luxury beyond even what I enjoy, and the latest in video games and all the fads of adolescent immaturity and I'm led to conclude that I'm rich because I once lived with hardship and had the reward of being able to cope. I would not wish upon them a return to yesteryear, but they will only know what they missed if they read and absorb something of oldtime memories.



Tymen Hofman is an expatriate Yankee-Canuck living in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Colombia president's greeting to church meeting seen as mixed blessing

Paul Jeffrey

BARRANQUILLA, Colombia (ENI) — Colombia's President Andres Pastrana has sent greetings to participants meeting in this Colombian port city for the fourth general assembly of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). But one prominent local pastor warned that churches should be wary of greetings from the president.

In a letter written on January 11, President Pastrana declared that the assembly would "help us consolidate in the heart of Colombia the concepts of tolerance, participation, equality, and respect — characteristics of a modern and Christian society."

But on January 16, Milciades Pua, a Presbyterian pastor in Barranquilla, reminded the assembly that "the hand which signed the letter to CLAI is the same hand which signed the Plan Colombia for the destruction of our people, the intensification of the war, for the destruction of the peasantry and their land, and for the creation of even more displaced persons."

Pastor Pua made his comments during a panel discussion taking place as part of the assembly.

Plan Colombia is a U.S.-backed expansion of an anti-drug strategy championed by Pastrana.

Providing alternatives to coca

According to Lilia Solano, professor of political science at the Jesuit-run Javeriana University in Colombia's capital, Bogota, and president of the Latin American Theological Fraternity, President Pastrana's original version of the Plan Colombia focused largely on providing economic alternatives to rural areas that have grown dependent on the cultivation of coca, the prime material used for the manufacture of cocaine. Colombia is notorious for drug-trafficking and drug cartels.

The final version of the Plan Colombia, was, however, "the U.S. version, elaborated and approved behind the backs of Colombians, fundamentally designed to combat narco-trafficking. But the aid is mostly military assistance for the armed forces," Professor Solano told participants in the CLAI assembly.

Most of the $1.3 billion (US) in U.S. aid for Plan Colombia will be used to dramatically increase the presence of U.S. troops here and provide 63 high-tech military helicopters to the Colombian military and police.

"The Plan Colombia is short on everything that would avoid war: human rights, justice, and a democratic system. So the U.S. aid is not to end the war, but rather to make the war worse," Professor Solano said. "The future of Colombia is a future of destruction, of war without end, and of indebtedness."

Pointing out that much of the aid from Washington would end up back in U.S. bank accounts, Professor Solano said: "This is a war that everyone is losing except for Uncle Sam. Meanwhile, we, like useful idiots, continue following orders that destroy the country."

Exploring ways to promote peace

Working with support from other major ecumenical councils in the world, CLAI has for years been exploring ways for the churches to promote peace. CLAI representatives have participated in preliminary peace negotiations both here and abroad.

Professor Solano challenged participants in the CLAI assembly to do even more.

"When the world's churches finally understood the reality of racism in South Africa, they engaged in new and expanded forms of solidarity," Professor Solano told ENI. "Colombia is today living in a situation of death. If the church around the world can finally understand that, then it will no longer be able to remain indifferent to our situation. We've invested years explaining to people what we're living through here in Colombia, but we haven't found much response in the churches. We need a more active level of solidarity that manifests itself in full support for the victims."

Retirement

What kind of care will I get when I grow old?

Harry der Nederlanden

"You don't have time to sit and talk with the residents or to hold a hand when it's needed," lamented Sherry, who has been working as a nurse in nursing homes for fifteen years. "It feels like an assembly line now. You're running up and down the halls and you can only give basic care."

"A few years ago," adds Kim, an aide, "we had a lot more volunteers who would help with such things as feeding patients who can't feed themselves. Now the patients are older and regulations make it harder to use volunteers."

Several staff at the meeting nodded in agreement. "Residents begin to feel like they're just a number," another one chimed in. "They're already losing their personalities and independence, and this makes it even worse."

What kind of care will you get when you grow old?

CC FILES

Those who are in long-term care are much older now than they were ten years ago, and older people need more care and resources.

A crisis looms

Long-term care workers are making it clear that unless there are changes made, a crisis looms in the care of the elderly.

The huge surge in population growth that happened in the post-war years known as the baby boom will soon start hitting the nursing homes. In fact, demands on long-term care facilities are already increasing faster than expansion. In Ontario, the government plans to add 175 homes and 20,000 beds by 2004. But is adding to the number of buildings and beds going to be enough?

The Christian Labour Association (CLAC), the third-largest union representing long-term care workers in Ontario, has created a task force composed of nine workers and four staff members to look into the matter. A series of public meetings were held across Ontario at the end of last year to garner input, which will be combined with information gleaned from other sources and organizations. The purpose of the study is to gather information, insight and suggestions from those working directly with long-term residents that will help shape policy in the future not just for the union, but also for employers and the government. Who better to consult than those providing day-to-day care? The statements at the beginning of this article were recorded at a workshop sponsored by the CLAC in St. Catharines, but I changed the names of the participants.

Demanding work load

Preliminary statistics already show that the work load in nursing homes is becoming more demanding. People are remaining in their homes longer, encouraged by home care and other factors. This means that those who are in long-term care are much older now than they were ten years ago, and older people need more care, more lifting, more equipment and resources. Over the last five years alone there was an 80 per cent decrease in the number of patients who need only light care while those classified as needing heavy care increased by 35 per cent. This has put much greater stresses and strains on the staff.

Caring for the new wave of patients is more complicated than it used to be, for they have a number of different problems. Because hospitals discharge patients much more quickly, nursing formerly provided in hospitals now has to be provided in the nursing home. Since patients are older, a much greater proportion are suffering from some sort of dementia such as Alzheimers. Incidents of aggression by badly confused patients are on the increase. All this adds up to the need for new equipment, new treatments, new medications — and more training. Fewer opportunities or funds, however, are available for staff to get additional training.

"We are getting a lot more psychiatric patients who used to be sent to special psychiatric facilities before de-institutionalization," Sandra, a supervisor, pointed out. "Our staff isn't trained to deal with aggressive patients. And you can't just drug them. Families now want less medication."

"Yes," agreed another nurse. "When you go to provide care for some residents, you have to have back-up because you know the patient will sometimes strike out."

"They're aggressive and unsteady, so they're much more likely to fall and get bruised. I feel like you need another staff member with you just to witness that you're not abusing the resident."

It's not all bad news, to be sure, for some of the problems arise from good trends: longer independence, longer and healthier lives, more home care, fewer medications and less use of restraints.

The government, however, provides funding to nursing facilities according to a formula created at a time when residents entered nursing homes at a younger age and were much more able to care for themselves. This means that long-term care facilities are not able to hire the extra staff needed to provide the extra care.

Stress on staff shows

The stress on staff is showing in a higher turnover rate; nurses and aides are finding jobs where they aren't run ragged and where they get better pay. Since there is a shortage of RNs, nursing homes have to compete with regular hospitals, and they're losing out. While staff is being asked to provide more intensive care and to do more lifting, they themselves are also getting older – 75 per cent of long term nursing staff are over 40 in Ontario and 25 per cent over 55. This means that when the big crush comes, a large percentage of the staff will be reaching retirement age. The Ontario government estimates that 27,500 new staff will have to be hired over the next few years, but it has not put a new funding formula in place to provide for the additional staff that will be needed on a per patient basis.

New Christian retirement community organized in Niagara

CC Staff

As Canadians grow older, there comes a time when keeping up the home in which they've raised their children becomes a burden, and they begin looking for something smaller with less upkeep. One of the options that has been around for a long time and which is growing in popularity is the Life Lease program. Seniors are remaining independent longer so that many end up having to move three times after retirement: first from the family home to a condo or apartment, then to a retirement home, and last of all, for some, to a nursing home.

Making transition easier

The Life Lease program seeks to make the transitions easier. It provides housing for seniors who are independent now but may eventually need some kinds of support to remain so. Under the Life Lease program, people buy their housing and pay a monthly maintenance fee just as they would when buying a condo. However, there are more controls on what sort of people will be able to live in the building. Only seniors, people of a similar age and with similar needs and interests, will live there to provide a sense of community. There are also so-called common areas, spaces and rooms that all residents may use.

Shalom Evergreen Terrace is one such project being organized in Grimsby, Ontario, adjacent to Shalom Manor, which was built in 1979. Like Shalom Manor,

See **LIFE LEASE** *page 13...*

An artist's conception of Shalom Evergreen Terrace, to be built this summer in Grimsby, Ontario.

Retirement

Singing is twice praying

Wilma Jonkheer

When I enter the hospital and unlock the door to the unit where I visit, the door automatically locks behind me. I have just entered the home of some twenty people who are not only mentally but also physically handicapped. More than half of them are in wheelchairs. The residents range in age from twenty-five to seventy-five. Only a few of them have regular visitors.

> I have come to believe that singing is twice praying. The staff see this as good therapy and encourage me to do so.

I do not have an agenda, for the patients themselves make up the agenda. Don comes to shake my hand and will continue to do so throughout the afternoon.

Larry, who is minimally verbal, is waiting for me to go with him to his room to look at his little cars.

SKJOLD PHOTOGRAPH

Most of the residents have short attention spans. At times I ask them to recite familiar Scripture verses with me.

His parents are first cousins and they have another son just like him.

Zechariah is a non-practising Jew and does not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. I tell him how privileged I feel to be visiting with him because Jesus, my Messiah, came from his people. He smiles, and when I sing with another patient, he comes to listen.

Antonia is a Roman Catholic and speaks little English. When I started visiting with him, I would make the sign of the cross, fold my hands and point upwards, and he would nod his head. When I come to see him now, he greets me while making the cross himself.

Suffering because of limitations

Stephen is the most aware of his illness and limitations and suffers much because of it. "I am not insane." he will say. I listen to him for a while, then slowly focus his attention on the beautiful tradition of his Greek Orthodox faith; and together we experience the riches of the Church Universal. When I leave, he is usually smiling again.

Carl is one of the residents who has no one that comes to see him. When I first started to work on the unit, he wanted nothing to do with me. He would sooner talk to a Buddhist than to a Christian, he would say, and then wheel away as fast as he could. When I heard he had been a bank manager, I asked him some questions about banking... and he responded.

'You are my friend'

Since then we have not only talked about banking, but about the beauty of nature and God's greatness as well. When I heard he knew some of the hymns, I made copies of them, and we sang them together. When I leave, he shakes my hand and says, "You are my friend," and I know what that means to him.

Leskard sits mainly in his wheelchair with his head on his chest. He left Europe permanently damaged by the horrors of World War II. He speaks only Polish. My efforts to communicate with him had precious few results. One day as I wheeled him out of the chapel and the pianist played, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," he lifted up his head and he said over and over, "Alleluia! Alleluia!" From that day on we were able to communicate beyond the usual way. I will greet him with: "Alleluia! Alleluia!" A well-spring of words will come: "Aleluja! Aleluja! Christus! Christus!"

Most of the residents have short attention spans. At times I will ask them to recite familiar Scripture verses with me. Singing with them has proven to be the most effective, as many still remember the hymns they learned in Sunday school. I have come to believe that singing is twice praying. The staff see this as good therapy and they encourage me to do so.

Looking forward to visits

Anna is in her room today. She has Huntington's disease and is no longer capable of carrying on a regular conversation — only a few sentences here and there. Her four grown children have their own lives and their own problems. They seldom come to see her.

When I visited with Anna before Christmas, she was literally beaming. "I bought them all a watch!" she said. I rejoiced with her as she looked forward to see her children's faces when they opened their gifts.

When I saw Anna after Christmas, she was waiting and could hardly be consoled. None of her children had come to see her. During times like this, I sit beside her stroking her hand, softly singing the hymns she still remembers until she grows calm again. Before leaving I ask her, "Who would you like me to pray for today?" She invariably answers, "For my children."

A nurse stands quietly by the door waiting to take Anna for her supper. As I walk with them to the dining room, the other residents have already gathered around the tables. Some on their own and some with help.

As I see the patients and their overwhelming needs, I am reminded of how Jesus had compassion when he saw the multitudes.

Wilma Jonkheer is a part-time chaplain in Whitby, Ontario.

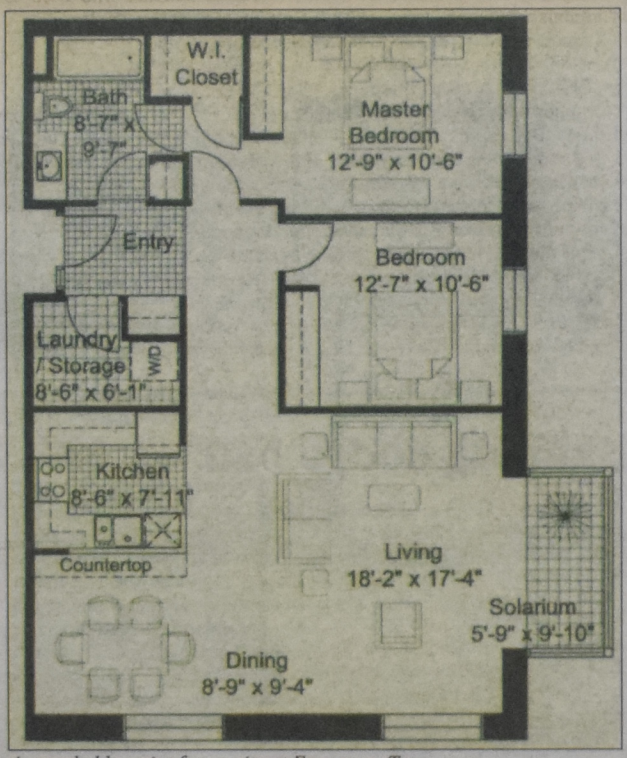
Life lease Christian retirement community

... continued from page 12

Evergreen Terrace was launched by members of the Reformed community. Although residents buy and sell their own condos according to the going market price, the property is managed on their behalf by a non-profit corporation

Says board chairman, John Bergshoeff: "This is how communities build communities. It will be a vibrant, affordable community dependent not on government housing programs but on our own community's resources, services and support."

Blueprints have been drawn up and construction will begin this summer. Evergreen Terrace will be an attractive five-storey building containing 98 apartments. Prices vary according to size, and some offer the square footage of many bungalows. Small, one-bedroom apartments are available starting at less than $140,000 but prices go up to over $200,000 for large suites that include indoor parking. All apartments are designed with the needs of seniors in mind, such as wider doors to accommodate wheelchairs, handrails in the hallways, lever-type door handles and faucets, and an emergency call system. There will be two elevators, bicycle storage, a security entrance, a common lounge on the main floor with a fireplace and a kitchen, a large workshop, and even a guest suite.



A sample blueprint for a suite at Evergreen Terrace.

The co-ordinator, Mel Elzinga, has lots of attractive literature on hand with much more information for those interested.

Over half are sold, mostly to people of Reformed background already living in the Niagara region.

Shalom Evergreen Terrace can be contacted at: 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, Ontario L3M 4N5 (905) 309-7888. Its website is: **www.life-lease.com**

The hole in the ark

Alex Buchan

"What is the best — and the worst — nail in the ark?"

I could hardly believe I was hearing the question. It was the same question I heard 20 years ago in a small, freezing church in Scotland, and launched a well-known story from the Celtic Christian tradition. But here I was sitting in a Shanghai house church, and the speaker was a Chinese Christian who afterwards was astonished to learn that Scottish people do not eat much rice.

How stories travel

It just shows how stories travel, and this one was much appreciated by the Chinese audience because it made clear the redemptive aspect of suffering. The story was little changed as a result of its export.

When Noah built his ark he forgot just one thing ... a nail. He had hammered in many nails, or big wooden pegs as they were then, but forgot just one. Trouble was, this hole was positioned below the waterline. If the floods came, the ark would surely sink. God tried to tell Noah about this, but Noah was much too preoccupied catching all the animals to listen.

Along strolls the devil and sees Noah herding the animals into the ark. What is going on? he wonders, and decides to take a closer look. He cannot just breeze past Noah as the devil, so he disguises himself, turning into a snake. He slithers into the ark by means of the hole where the nail should have gone.

Once inside, he lets his eyes adjust to the darkness. Feeling hungry, he gobbles a nearby frog. But just when he is plotting greater mischief, he sees Noah raising his hands to bless all the animals.

Well, the devil does not wish to hang around for a blessing, so he slithers down the hole again by which he entered. Only this time he is fatter, because he ate the frog. Down come the rains but the ark stays afloat ... thanks to the devil plugging up the hole.

So to the question, what is the best and the worst nail in the ark? The answer is ... the devil!

I remember the Scottish audience having a repressed snigger at the story illustration. The Chinese were not so restrained. "Wahhh," they cried, and they should know. Many of them lived through the period when Mao tried to annihilate the church, but lived on to see that Mao — in the providence of God — had merely prepared the ground for revival.

Truly, God is great because He can take even evil and turn it to good. Every persecuted Christian has to believe that, since there is so much evil surrounding them.

Alex Buchan is Compass Direct Asia Bureau Chief. He kept a diary on his travels in 2000, keeping an ear open for the universal wisdom and challenge of those persecuted for their faith in Christ. This is one of his journal entries.

Fifty golden years

Intangible Things

Heidi VanDerSlikke

I have always enjoyed browsing through the classifieds of *Christian Courier*. Of particular enjoyment to me is reading about people celebrating 40, 50 or more years of marriage. In this day and age these people are living proof that relationships can and do survive a lifetime. But this edition is really special. If you look at today's classifieds you'll see my inlaws are marking half a century of marriage. (My mother-in-law tells me she always reads my column first, so at this point she will no doubt leave me to go check out the ad!)

It's always fun to think of what Mom and Dad were like in their younger years. My mother-in-law, always the proper lady in my mind, was apparently first attracted to my father-in-law for one reason: he drove a motorcycle. They had their first date on April 1, 1950, but they're quick to tell you it was no joke!

Married on Valentine's Day

We love to bug Dad about being so romantic as to get married on Valentine's Day, but the truth is they were wed in Holland and Cupid wasn't an issue. Still they made a cute couple on their wedding picture; the smiling bride, not quite 20 years old, and her bright-eyed groom, just turned 21. A week later he left her behind and set sail for Canada under the influence of a bachelor uncle. She followed as soon as possible, a few months later.

As long as I've known them, Mom and Dad have been sensible, faithful people, not prone to big changes or major risk-taking. And yet in 1951 they left everything familiar and beloved and set out to make a life for themselves halfway around the world. They were part of the wave of post-war immigrants (as were my own parents) who came to Canada with high hopes and great expectations.

Terrific stories to tell

They have so many terrific stories to tell, starting with crossing the Atlantic by boat, then settling in a strange new land where they didn't even speak the language. Mom learned English with the help of the Sears catalogue. Some of the friendships formed in those early days are still treasured today.

Their anniversary photographs over the years tell the story. On their silver wedding anniversary they had a family photo done with their two proud children. On their thirtieth, we had a party for them at Nellie's house. There are lots of snapshots but I'm glad there's no family photo, since I was just a few months away from having twins (much to everyone's surprise). Five years later they delayed the family photo so that all of their grandchildren could be on it — two boys from Nellie and her husband, our twins, and the baby of the family — Jessica, born in March that year. The picture from their fortieth is one of my favourites (and we all know how hard it is to please me with a photograph).

Rough weather and dinner plans

So now we're in the midst of planning a celebration for their fiftieth anniversary. It could be interesting. They've invited family and closest friends for dinner at the local legion. Thing is, traditionally, when VanDerSlikkes make dinner plans in the winter, the weather gets rough. For a while we used to try to go out together for Dad's birthday (January 16), but the weather was so consistently bad we gave up. Then we decided to do it for Nellie's birthday (April 7). Great idea. Would you believe there was a blizzard that night! Since then we've only attempted the dinner thing on very significant occasions, and this is one of them, I suppose if worse comes to worse we could always celebrate fifty and a half years in August, but hopefully that won't be necessary.

The Dutch have this quaint custom of congratulating family members on special occasions. At first I found it a little odd to be congratulated on Jack's birthday and such, but somehow in this ease it seems very appropriate. We may not have contributed to the success of Mom and Dad's marriage, but we've most certainly been blessed by it. What a privilege to be part of the celebration. Here's hoping for good weather.

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.

Diaconal Ministries of Eastern Canada provides resource persons on aging

CC Staff

Several years ago Diaconal Ministries of the CRC in eastern Canada appointed four resource persons on aging who go out to local churches to suggest and discuss ways to support the elderly with deacons or with members of the congregation.

The resource persons are Peter DeBruyne, Janet DeGroot, Wilma Runia, and Peter Zwart. They have sponsored seminars on such topics as the aging process, the role of the elderly in the church, church programs for seniors, the sandwich generation and visiting the elderly. Resource persons also conduct what they call "guided conversations" with church members in which they help churches to look as what is being done already in a particular church, provide suggestions for other ways to help, and guide discussion on how new programs can be implemented.

A publication called *Partners* is published twice a year and distributed to deacons in eastern Canada to keep them informed about resources and programs available in the CRC. CRC publications offers some excellent resources.

No Such Thing as Over the Hill by James R. Kok is addressed to seniors to encourage them to think of retirement as a new stage of life rather than as the beginning of the end. *Trading Places* by Henry Holstege, Professor of Sociology at Calvin College, is a guide for those who are faced with caring for aging parents. It is very practical and can also be used by groups.

Both are available from CRC Publications.

Banning dodge ball

CECIL COUNTY, Maryland (Religion Today) — Fed up with public school children being nothing more than walking targets, school board members in Cecil County, Maryland., are getting ready to do something about it. They're going to vote next week on whether or not to outlaw dodgeball.

Apparently, dodge ball is no longer Politically Correct. The object of the game is to hit the dodger with a ball. If you hit them, they're out. If they catch your throw, you sit down. This level of violence has ruffled the feathers of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, which imputes evil to dodge ball.

"The object — to throw things at the kids, to hit the kids and then thereby eliminate them from participation — is not consistent with wanting them to be participating," said a spokesperson.

Rick Hanetho of the National Amateur Dodge Ball Association, doesn't understand why they're so concerned. "You virtually cannot get hurt by the ball, even if it's a point-blank two- or three-feet away throw," he said.

Hanetho notes that the logic used to target dodge ball might affect football, too. Football receivers are targets as well, and getting tackled is a fate far more injurious to students than getting hit with a foam ball.

Analysis

The Nigerian Christian-Muslim standoff (II)

Part 2: The Muslim Viewpoint

Dr. Jan H. Boer

In the last issue of* Christian Courier, *I promised more on the issue of Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria. That initial article dealt the Christian point of view. This article attempts to present some aspects of the Muslim viewpoint of these relationships. However, I need first to do some spade work to cut out the underbrush before proceeding with the task at hand.

COURTESY ALAN DOERKSEN

Calling the spade

The point of view expressed in these articles is not very popular with most Nigerian Christians. They have suffered too much at the hands of Muslims to be very sympathetic to them or to lend them an objective ear. Some of them realize that the secular solution advanced by Christian leaders is not an ideal solution, but it is the best they have to offer at this point.

Similarly, the viewpoint I express below may not be politically correct with some Canadian or other Western readers. My experience is deeply colored by the Nigerian context where Islam is becoming increasingly intolerant as it fears losing its powerful grip on the country due to a growing Christian community. In contrast, most readers of CC experience Muslims as a small expatriate minority that represents a threat to no one and that tugs at the heart of sympathetic Christians to give them a place in the Canadian sun — or ice. Here in Canada the Muslim community seeks protection from the dominant culture and religion, while in Nigeria Christians feel they need protection from Islam.

Religions present different faces in different contexts. The face of today's Western Christianity is that of a seemingly retreating religion. That is a very different face of the bygone "glory" of "Christendom." Similarly, the faces of various Christian communities living under Communist regimes or those living with Muslim majorities have a wide range of different wrinkles. Different contexts develop different faces.

The same is true of Islam. In the more distant past, Muslims were tolerant and self-confident enough to appoint Christians to very high positions in their governments — but that was in the past. Even then, as now, where Islam formed the majority, it invariably arrogated to itself the right to define the scope of minority religions. In Muslim countries, Christians have never been free to express themselves or live out their religions fully. They are at best second-class citizens who are merely tolerated. In the previous article I referred to the status of *dhimmis* in this regard.

On the other hand, when Muslims constitute small minorities, as is the case in some African countries and in all Western nations, they will adopt the face of the helpless victims of discrimination. They will exploit to the hilt modern concepts of toleration to their own advantage as well as the bad colonial conscience of the West. As a result, Western people, including many Christians among them, bend over backwards to accommodate the Muslims among them by fighting alongside them in their struggle for recognition and rights.

In such environments, Muslims claim the very rights and freedoms they consistently deny the minorities living in Muslim countries. Our bad consciences prevent us from recognizing this incongruity or exposing it. We would invite the horrible charge of being politically incorrect.

It is high time that we recognize that Muslims through the centuries have been as imperialistic, if not worse, than has the West. While they continuously dangle the shame of the Crusades before the Western conscience, they themselves have been waging a continuous crusade called *jihad* up till today. And while the Christian community has long ago recognized its guilt with respect to the Crusades and colonialism, Islam with its anemic view of sin has yet to apologize to anyone for its treatment of conquered peoples.

It is time Western Christians confront the Muslims amongst them with their own record, for *both* parties to confess their sins and start with a new slate together. The whimper of one-sided Christian confession and weak-kneed unilateral Western accommodation helps no one and certainly will not earn us the respect of Muslims. "Enlightened," tolerant Canadians are mere tools in their hands. Western aid to Muslim communities in Nigeria is accepted gladly, but the donors are regarded with contempt as mere rich pagans who are only tolerated because of their wealth.

Hard, brutal and unselected facts are among the prerequisites for genuine dialogue and for coming to terms with each other. There is no one more eager for such dialogue and approachment than myself, but it will not seriously occur unless we are prepared to face the honest, bilateral facts and clean up what has been swept under the rug for too long.

Of course, some of us know an exeption or two to the above attitude. However, these are individual exceptions that do not represent the dominant mood of world Islam.

The dominant Muslim perspective

In this section I present aspects of the dominant Muslim perspective of Nigerian Christian-Muslim relations as I see them from the outside and as I have experienced and observed them during my 30 years among them. Much of what follows comes from reading their own writings or from reading between the lines.

A. Infatuation with the Muslim religion

A basic element for our discussion is the Muslim infatuation with their religion. Non-Muslim students of Islam have repeatedly observed how deeply Muslims love their religion and all its trappings. They have the deepest admiration for the Quran. They absolutely love the sharia, their law. They boast repeatedly of its comprehensive way of life. They are deeply thankful for its beautiful simplicity and appreciative of its appeal to reason. Some have called it "fanaticism." No other religion, it is claimed by life-long observers, has been able to arouse such absolute loyalty and pride. They have no doubt that they are the true people of God. I admire them for their devotion and wish the same could be said of more Christians.

It is this devotion that has spread Islam both militarily and peacefully, including the use of economic, political and diplomatic pressures. Muslims cannot imagine why in the world anyone would resist becoming a Muslim. Such a beautiful religion! Why resist it? Besides, it is incumbent on everyone to accept Allah, his prophet and his Quran. This is not a matter of free choice. It is a beautiful obligation that anyone in his right mind will naturally and gladly accept. And so Muslims have no compunctions about using almost any method open to them to recruit, persuade, cajole, trick, buy, marry or force people into the fold. It is the best thing they can do for them. The use of government power and facilities is perfectly legitimate in this divinely ordered crusade — excuse me: *jihad*.

Because of this divine obligation on all men, Muslims appear not to have any sense of fairness with respect to other people. In the heat of the Nigerian battle, the country's Muslims have almost forgotten the traditional special Muslim regard for Christians as "people of the book." Instead, Christians are basically despised and referred to with the contemptuous term "*khaffir*". It is the same term supporters of Apartheid and racists have applied to South African Blacks. In Nigeria, Muslims may preach their gospel anywhere and even block major city roads regularly for their purposes, but they do not extend the same privilege to others. They may quote from the Bible, publicly say or write extremely derogatory things about Christianity, but woe betide the Christian who publicly quotes from the Quran. Such Christian quotations have become the excuse for bloody riots. Muslims feel free to dominate government facilities like press, radio and TV while denying almost any coverage to others.

Behind all of this lies the Muslim infatuation with their religion. How could anyone possibly object to the use of any device at all in the propagation of such beautiful and powerful truth? Islam is the most democratic of all and constitutes the movement for true justice in the world. That being the case, what is wrong with using all the resources that Allah has placed in their hands for the pursuit of *da'wah*, Muslim mission? Is that not the reason Allah gave them these resources? To fail to use them would be nothing short of disobedience. After all, Islam is the embodiment of what all reasonable men seek.

It will no doubt surprise many readers of this article that Muslims claim that their earthly mission is to work towards democracy, justice and liberty. Westerners hardly associate Islam with these noble aspirations. Yet Muslims claim that these constitute the great goals of *da'wah*. What Muslims consider democratic and just is experienced by others as the very opposite. A case of doublespeak? I do not think so. I consider it rather a case of blindness caused by their infatuation with Islam.

B. Islam vs the West
Crusade and Jihad

Islam has overcome many forms of opposition throughout its history, but many of its major challenges have come from the West. There were the Crusades, an early Christian variety of *jihad*. These continue to play an important role

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Analysis

The Nigerian Christian-Muslim standoff (II)

... continued from p. 15

in the Muslim attitude towards the West and its traditional religion, Christianity. They refuse to acknowledge the many sounds of contrition from the West about these Crusades. Forgiving and forgetting is not a highly developed skill in Islam. The Crusades continue to raise their hackles. The fact that they themselves have been waging an unending crusade or jihad does not give others the same right. There is no similar contrition on their part or any apology ever uttered to anyone.

Colonialism

And then came colonialism that subjected the entire House of Islam into the pride and sense of superiority of Western *khaffirs*. The people of God subjected to ignorant outsiders. Taken advantage of during a moment of disarray and weakness. This situation was theologically impossible and totally unacceptable. Even though Nigerian Muslim political leaders made the best of their assigned role within the British scheme of indirect rule, deep down the arrangement was considered a profound insult.

Nigerian Muslims nevertheless took advanrage of the colonial setup. The British broke down many barriers to the further spread of Islam. The end of slave raiding slowly made the Muslim trader more welcome into traditionally hostile communities. He could settle in the community, offer a wider range of goods than previously available and thus become associated with progress and convenience. The British appointed Muslims to responsible civil service positions because they were literate and seemed so much more civilized. The British also appointed many Muslim chiefs and emirs to rule over non-Muslim communities, a situation that is currently being challenged and increasingly rejected by affected ethnic groups. The Muslim establishment of the North even delayed independence from the British because it preferred to share power with the foreign invader rather than with southern Nigerians.

In spite of the advantageous position gained by Muslims during colonialism, they hated the regime and experienced it as the ultimate insult to be ruled by foreign *khaffirs*. It was an insult. Never mind that Muslim powers were imposed on non-Muslim Nigerians. That was another subject altogether that had no connection with their own plight. Imposing Muslim order on others was doing them the greatest favor. But for Muslims to be subjected to others was intolerable.

Secularism

In spite of the advantages Islam gained under colonialism in countries like Nigeria, the entire world Muslim community considers colonialism a serious attempt to undermine Islam. Although colonialism helped Islam spread in previously hostile places, at the same time it loosed a poisonous virus among the people — the virus of Western secularism. Secularism is regarded as an attack on the very foundations of Islam, for it would restrict the scope of their religion to a narrow slice of life as it has done in the West. Secularism seeks to reduce religion, including Islam, to a religious sector and to religious institutions that have little or no influence in the larger culture.

Even today, Nigerian Muslims regard Western secularism as a deliberate, calculated and concerted attempt to destroy their religion. This aspect of colonialism was experienced as so damaging to Islam that it by far offset the favorable climate it created for Muslim *da'wah*. Secularism is experienced by Nigerian Muslims as having totally disoriented the thinking of their people, a situation they are struggling very hard to overcome. This is the struggle that lies at the bottom of current hostilities with Christians. It is the struggle of comprehensive religion versus secularism.

The fact that Islam traditionally imposes similar religious reductions on minority religions seems to be irrelevant to Muslims; they see no connection or inconsistency. These are not parallel situations as far as they are concerned. Restricting other religions is a divine duty; restricting Islam is satanic and undermines it. They merely shrug off the accidental parallel as irrelevant.

Western moral bankruptcy

The colonial secular setup is made worse by the fact that Muslims consider Western private and public morality to be far below Muslim standards. They have contempt for Western moral standards. They see corruption and degradation in every area of Western culture. What possible benefit can be derived from such a corrupted people? And then to think that these people come with such a strong superiority complex! Unbelievable and unacceptable, totally. Technically they may have some contributions to make, but spiritually and morally they are bankrupt.

The history of slavery as depicted in the previous article is conveniently forgotten. It is only its Western version that is remembered and condemned. Again, that one-sided picture. It appears everywhere.

Mission and Church

The spread of Christianity by Western missionaries is regarded by Muslims as part of the colonial scheme to undermine them. The fact that colonialism seriously hampered the development of Christianity, though well documented, is not taken seriously by Muslims. As far as they are concerned, colonialism and missions worked hand in glove to subdue Islam. They were partners, and no documented research is allowed to lead them to a more nuanced view of that relationship. They refuse to hear it. It does not fit their interpretation.

The Muslim equation of Christianity with colonialism and, therefore with secularism, gains support from the current Nigerian Christian call for a secular approach to government and politics. Does this not prove the point? Christianity is seen as a member of an unholy triad along with colonialism and secularism. It is part and parcel of the international campaign to destroy Islam. Pure and simple. Hence, Christianity must be resolutely resisted along with colonialism and its successors, neo-colonialism and, now, the free market scheme. All of them must be destroyed. There is no choice. It is either they or Islam. Co-existence is no real ultimate option – except as a temporary strategy forced on Islam by the situation.

The Christian church has made remarkable inroads into northern Nigeria among former Traditionalists and not inconsiderable inroads among Muslims. Prior to colonialialism, these were the people subjected to Muslim powers and slave raids, and they often took it passively. However, over the past two decades Christians have not only increased in number but also in courage and resistance. They have moved from a passive mode into a much more activistic one. During the 70s they passively, though grudgingly, accepted the government take-over of their institutions, but today they aggressively protect their rights and turf.

The Nigerian Muslim community, especially in the north, has become nervous about this development. They are not used to such challenges. They do not know how to respond appropriately. They tend to respond very clumsily — with an offended and almost "holy" surprise. How can you Christians say such unkind things about us, the people of God? We, who are so righteous and just, so blessed, so religious and wise, so understanding, so tolerant and democratic.

This is not meant to be sarcastic. It represents the actual spirit in which Islam in Nigeria is responding to the current Christian challenge. Neither is this to accuse Muslims of hypocrisy. It is not hypocrisy; it is blindness caused by infatuation with Islam. This infatuation has closed their ears, their minds and their hearts. This infatuation, combined with an inadequate anemic sense of sin, makes it next to impossible for the Muslim community to listen to others. They are almost constitutionally incapable of listening empathetically to critique and complaints from others.

Mainstream and fundamentalism

Some may argue that the Muslim stance as described above does not represent mainline Islam. And indeed, in Nigeria some who consider themselves more mainstream have sought to disassociate themselves and Islam as a whole from so-called Fundamentalism, but such attempts are hardly persuasive. If there were a more mainstream Islam in Nigeria with greater understanding of others, with a greater sense of fairness, the popular government-owned Hausa-language newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, would be more open to Christian writers. The airwaves of Kaduna Radio would be more accessible to Christian speakers.

"Mainstream" Islam just does not scream as much as does Fundamentalism, but it is basically in agreement with the latter. It sometimes feels embarrassed at the occasional crudeness of Fundamentalists. We do not hear of mainstream Muslim opposition to present attempts to unseat Christianity in Kano, Illorin or Zamfara. Mainstream Islam may be more polished and diplomatic. It sounds more fair, balanced and rational. However, deep down I am convinced that it not only appreciates the rough and radical expressions of Fundamentalism but also uses them as its running dogs. Fundamentalism is doing the dirty work for "more respectable" mainstream Islam in Nigeria.

So, here then we have the basic building blocks of the Nigerian Muslim attitude towards Christians: infatuation with their Muslim religion; religious pride; lack of any sense of fairness; intolerance; contempt for others; a deep sense of insult; an anemic view of sin and evil; deep frustrations, anger and nervousness. Unless that baggage can be significantly reduced, I see no way for Muslims and Christians to come to some sort of peaceful solution to their decades-long standoff.

But Christians also need to make significant accommodations, especially in their attitude towards secularism. More about that some other time.

Jan H. Boer is the former director of the Institute of Church and Society in Jos, Nigeria. At present he is a freelance researcher and author. For further background and information see his website at www.iserv.net/~boerjanh, which also provides a bibliography.

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Nose for News

Bert Hielema

WILL MAD COW DISEASE come to North America? Is it only a matter of time that we too will share in the hysteria currently hyping Europe? What is so frightening about Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, the official name for Mad Cow Disease?

It has killed about 80 people in 8 years, among a European population of 350 million, less than the number killed each day on their highways. In Germany two ministers — Agriculture and Health — have recently resigned because they confessed that they had not dealt with the problem soon enough. Have you ever heard of a Transport minister resigning because of traffic deaths?

Australia and New Zealand have closed their borders to any beef imports from Europe, in whatever form. The press in Europe is gripped by Mad Cow fever, and, I must admit, the matter has tremendous mass media potential: collapsing cows, dying children, disembowelled animals, food phobias. Vegetarianism is becoming the vogue.

Suppose — no, it's impossible in today's open atmosphere — but suppose that it already has arrived in North America, but the governments are suppressing the news, waiting to tell us at the politically right moment, to draw attention away from a looming crisis, such as a severe recession? Remember the Ontario Water scare? Imagine what a food scare can do to divert the mind of people, particularly when it can be blamed on the godless Europeans?

I do believe, however, that it is quite possible that it is already dormant here, because the disease originates in cattle feed that contains parts of other animals, also done here in spite of strict regulations forbidding it. Starkly put, herbivore cows are deliberately made meat eaters, cannibals actually, and fed their own species.

Perhaps Europeans are so upset by this disease because deep in their unconscious they sense that if eating meat kills cattle, it could also do them in. You may think I have a touch of Mad Cow fever, but I see a parallel here between humans and climate change. The image of 'Kine gone Crazy' consuming its own kind serves to me as an illustration of the madness of Climate Change through which humanity is devouring itself by its own actions.

LET'S FACE US: WE, IN North America and the West, have made a conscious choice. Asked to choose between a model of all-out capitalistic growth, which has always been the American Way, and the prospect of a material frugality, which is the true meaning of the word 'economy', we have opted for growth at all costs, even our own existence.

Capitalism has closely developed as described by Schumpeter (1883-1950): a "perennial gale of creative destruction," its goal being "to maximize personal consumption."

The ultimate way to maximize personal consumption, through the 'most out of this world' shopping experience, is outlined in a new book. Jeremy Rifkin, in *The Biotech Century*, says that: "Our way of life is likely to be transformed more fundamentally in the next few decades than in the previous thousand years.... Nature is being made anew, this time by human beings.... It is our creation now. We make the rules. We create the world, and because we do, we no longer feel beholden to outside forces and universal truths."

He says that soon we can make decisions over what genes to insert, recombine, or delete in an effort to 'alter', 'transform,' and 'redesign' ourselves and our children in the Creative Age of unlimited consumer choice. These new genetic technologies grant us godlike powers to select the biological futures and features of the many beings who come after us — the best buying bonanza ever.

***TIME* MAGAZINE** reported a few weeks ago that XENA, a little pig cloned from fetal pig skin cells, may eventually create a supply of genetically modified pig livers that, no doubt for a stiff fee, would be acceptable to the human immune system. One could argue that last century's most striking single feature was the atom bomb and nuclear power, now largely abandoned for financial and environmental reasons, yet still a threat and a frightening example of technology gone wrong. In a similar but more insidious way, the new biotech revolution will affect every aspect of our lives: the way we eat, the way we date and marry (if we still do), the way we have our babies (if we still do), the way our children are raised and educated, the way we work and engage in politics, the way we express our faith, the way we perceive the world around us and our place in it. Concludes Rifkin: "The biotech revolution will force each of us to put a mirror to our most deeply held values, making us ponder the ultimate question of the purpose and meaning of existence."

It seems to me that the central debate in the coming years will be society's relationship with creation, which is basically a deeply religious question.

WORLDWATCH ISSUES each year a book about creation called: *State of the World*, and the 2001 document came out a few weeks ago. Each year, the signs of ecological decline have accelerated, and, with the election of the creation-bashing Bush team, the loss of political momentum is becoming more evident.

There is a striking story in this book. It relates how in 1601 an English sea captain, James Lancaster, commanded four ships sailing from England to India. To one crew he daily served lemon juice. To the other three crews he did not, and there 110 of the 278 sailors died of scurvy, a disease that in early naval history claimed more lives than warfare or accidents. The British navy did not stock citrus fruits until 1795, almost 200 year later, and the merchant marine followed suit only in 1865. Despite the magnitude of the scurvy problem and the availability of a simple solution, the authorities were slow to act.

Our response to the global environmental crisis looks more and more like the inaction of the British Navy. The trouble is that we don't just play with the lives of sailors: the lives of many people are at stake, especially in Asia. Perhaps that's the reason why we don't get too excited.

I don't want to rehash all the possible calamities outlined in *State of the World 2001*: I have the distinct notion that you are fed-up with tales of looming disasters. However, let me tell you that insurance companies are worried, even if we are not. In the 1950s, there were 20 great catastrophes, with economic setbacks of less than $40 billion in today's dollars. In the 1990s this had increased to 86 major calamities with losses of more than $600 billion.

Given the trend here, the first decade of 2000 will see even greater climatic turmoil. In the most emphatic warning yet, scientists from 99 nations, meeting in Shanghai last week, warned that temperatures could rise by 5.8° C over the next century, due to human-created pollution. Said Dr. Robert Watson: "A country like China has done more than the U.S. here."

THERE IS A REASON FOR that, and perhaps I have discovered part of the answer.

One of my favorite authors is Harold Bloom, Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University and Berg Professor of English at New York University. Born in 1930, he is hailed as America's most distinguished literary critic, and author of the *Western Canon*. He calls himself a gnostic Jew without hope. He knows the Hebrew Bible as few others, and is well up on the American ecclesiastical scene, resulting in a highly controversial book, called *The American Religion*, with the subtitle: *The emergence of the Post-Christian Nation*.

In this book he examines the American Soul as it is expressed in the Mormons, Christian Science, Jehovah Witnesses and especially in the largest body of Protestantism, the Southern Baptists – all of whom, says he, have turned gnostic. In my NIV Bible, in the introduction to the letters of John, gnosticism is called the most dangerous heresy, teaching that spirit is entirely good and matter entirely evil. Based on this, Bloom argues that the American Religion is gnostic, masks itself as Protestant Christianity, yet has ceased to be Christian. The American Religion sees the Creation of the world and the Fall into sin as the same event. Creation is fallen, matter is evil and does not belong to God anymore. Thus, we can exploit it. Bloom writes: "The U.S. is a religion-mad country... (for them) the Hebraic version of the creator in Genesis, (is) a god to be at best a botcher or ignoramus, or at worst a spirit of malevolence."

Their deepest knowledge — as Gnostics — is that they are no part of the Creation but existed as spirits before it, and are as old as God himself. If this is true, then it comes as no surprise to me that these people in Washington care not for creation.

Watching the Bush parade on January 20, I noticed the prominence of the U.S. flag. Bush's first action was to stop supporting birth control programs overseas. Says Bloom, the flag and the fetus symbolize the American Religion. And later: "The fetus must not be aborted — something I agree with — but whether the infant starves or not, seems for Bush and his spiritual advisors, a very secondary matter." The book written in 1991, refers here to Papa Bush, who then was the president.

I think that we can see some of that influence in the Republican Party, which Bloom calls the political arm of the American Religion, where "the unborn is regarded higher than the born because the fetus is innocent, but the new-born babe is a fallen creature and is a drain on the pious taxpayer."

He also quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer's comment that "God has granted American Christianity no Reformation."

Bloom concludes: "If Woodrow Wilson proves correct, and we were intended to be a spirit among the nations of the world, then the 21st century will mark a full-scale return to the wars of religion."

Bert Hielema spends up to 90 minutes each day reading on line material. He still reads, on average, a book each week.

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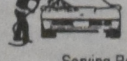

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, nine business days prior to publication.

RATES
All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (pci) + GST (columns are two inches wide).
Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 pci + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS
There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged pci, but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

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Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 pci per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS
We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD
mail: *Christian Courier*
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St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
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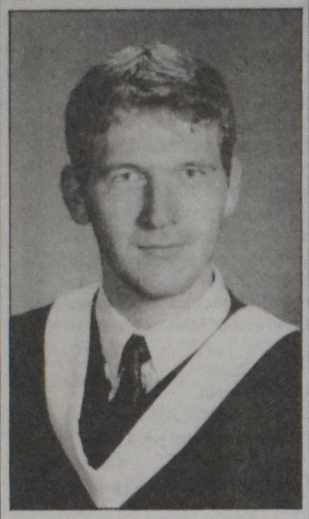
OTHER INFORMATION
a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style.
b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Birth

VAN HARMELEN:
Peter & Rachel Van Harmelen thank God for the birth of a healthy daughter
Annalies Elizabeth
born at the Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus on January 14, 2001, at 3:32 a.m., weighing 7 lbs. 15 ozs. Annalies is a little sister for Erin and Marissa and a granddaughter for Henry & Jane Boehm of Portapique, Nova Scotia and Martin & Wilma Van Harmelen of Oshawa, Ontario.
Home address: 2260 Georgina Drive, Ottawa, ON K2B 7M1.
E-mail: petervhcga@ottawa.com

Graduation



EDWARD THEODORE SPEK
Mrs. Tena Spek of Brampton, Ont. is very proud to announce the graduation of her son Edward Spek on December 2, 2000, with a degree of Master of Philosophy of the University of Glasgow, Scotland.
Well done Ed, we are very proud of you. May the Lord bless you.
Your mother.

Anniversaries

Best wishes to Henk & Ann Morsink on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Garijp, Fr. the Netherlands — Waterloo, Ontario
1951 February 15 2001
"There may be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." (Psalm 4:6)
With grateful hearts we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
HENK and ANN MORSINK
(nee VAN DER VELDE)
Congratulations from:
Nina & Roy – Chatham
Fred & Betty – Waterloo
Kees & Margaret – Waterloo
Jolanda & Dwayne – Mississauga
and 12 grandchildren.
We invite family and friends to join us for an Open House, Saturday February 10, from 2-4 p.m. at the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church, 209 Bearinger Rd., Waterloo, Ont.
Best wishes only.
Home address: 103 Shaughnessy Place, Waterloo, ON N2T 1C8

Anniversaries

Koekange, the Neth. — Drayton, Ont.
1951 February 2001
"See the winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come." (Song of Solomon 2:11-12)
With thankfulness to our faithful God, we hope to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our parents and grandparents
HANK and ALICE REINDERS
(nee FLUIT)
May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His loving care.
With love from:
Jean & George Wolting
Cheryl and Sean, Alisa, Jay
Rose & Ron McComb
Fred & Carol Reinders
Gerry Reinders
Fran & Rob Duiker
Bethany, Thomas, Preston
Ron & Marion Reinders
Chad, Shane, Chelsea
Marilyn & Murray McQueen
Scott, Carly
Joy & John Steele
Krystle
An Open House will be held on Saturday, February 17, 2001 in the Drayton Christian Reformed Church from 2-4 p.m. Greetings may be sent to their home address: Box 144, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0.

Congratulations to Hank & Alice Reinders on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Hazerswoude the Neth. — Harriston Ont.
1951 February 14 2001
"...for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deut.31:6b)
With joy and thanksgiving we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
JOOP and MARIA VANDERSLIKKE
(nee MATZE)
Love and best wishes for many more happy years from your family:
Nellie & Terry Martin — Stratford
Chris & fiancee Tammy, Rob
Jack & Heidi VanderSlikke — Harriston
James, Stephanie, Jessica
Home address: Box 792, Harriston, ON N0G 1Z0

Congratulations to Joop & Maria VanderSlikke on their 50th wedding anniversary.

1941 February 18 2001.
With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents
BERENDINA and GERD EGGENGOOR
We pray that the Lord will continue to bless and keep them in his loving care.
Ed & Evelyn Eggengoor
Betty Ann & James Sjaarda (Oliver, Julia), Dr. Nancy & George de Kleer (baby on the way), Mark & Annette Eggengoor, (Kira, Rane, Jared), Caroline & Paul Harris (Sierra, Brooke)
Gesina Eggengoor & Joe Moltgen
Steven
Henry & Joy (†) Eggengoor
Susan & Mike McLachlin, Brenda & David Tofts (Spencer), Joanne & Mike Zolli
Home address: 146 Cedar Island Rd., Orillia, ON L3V 1T1

Birth

MAAS (BOUWERS):
Thank you Lord for your wonderful gift of new life.
Noah Gerrit
arrived safely on January 3, 2001 weighing 7lbs 7oz. Another son for Kevin and Deborah Maas and a brother for Logan. Grandson for Gary & Mary Maas and Hank and Fran Bouwers. Great-grandson for Mr. & Mrs. M. Maas, Mrs.J. Bouwers and Mrs.J. Huizinga.
Address: 29 Dovesong Dr., Brampton, ON L6R 1V9

Birthday

With great joy and gratitude to God, we celebrate with our father and grandfather
LEO (LEFERT) BATTERINK
his 80th birthday on Feb. 3, 2001.
We rejoice in his testimony of a life filled with grace and blessings.
With much love:
Mary & Ed Faber
Heather & Tim, Tim & Leanne, Ryan, Jon
Annette Westra
Ian, Leona
Len & Nienke Batterink
Marie, Jennifer, Joshua, Kristin
Clarence & Jeri Batterink
Melanie, Kyle
Address: Leo & Tena Batterink, 400 Dominion St., Unit 153, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8

Classifieds

Anniversary

Congratulations to Harold and Tina Radersma on their 50th wedding anniversary.

1951 February 22 2001

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut.33:27)

With joy and thanksgiving we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

HAROLD and TINA RADERSMA
(nee STIENSTRA)

Congratulations Mom and Dad! May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His loving care. With love from your children and grandchildren:

Tollina & Frank DeWaard — Brantford
Carolyn, Jeremy, Andrew
Harry & Juli Radersma — Brantford
Jeffrey, Steven
Wilma & Gerry Chiasson — Brantford
Crystal, Brandon
Renee & Pardo Vulcano — Brantford
Jason, Michelina
Joyce & Jim Buisman — Norval
Michael, Alisha, Daniel, Justin
Melissa and Kimberley in Heaven
Jim & Laurie Radersma — Brantford
Ryan, Aaron

We invite family and friends to join us for an Open House on Feb.24, 2001, from 2-4 p.m. at the Covenant Christian Reformed Church in Woodstock, Ont.

Home address: 111 John Davies Dr., Woodstock, ON N4T 1N2

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Obituary

"The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." (Ps.121:8)

On January 2, 2001, the Lord took home

TED (TAEKLE) SOEPBOER

of Forest, Ontario, in his 78th year. Thankful for his gentle devotion, his loving example and rejoicing that his battle with cancer is over, are his beloved wife of 53 years Audrey (nee De Vries) and his children and grandchildren:

Bill & Mary — Oyen, Alta.
Bev & Jim, Barb & Allen, Barb and Carol and seven great-grandchildren
Harry & Gwen — Stratford, Ont.
Willie & Nick Doornbosch — Forest
Nick Jr., Rod & Laura, Dwayne, Jeff and Del
Freda Schneider — Sarnia, Ont.
Jenny, Christopher and Jodi
Ted Jr. & Sue — Forest, Ont.
Ted III, Eric and Justine
Harold & Brenda — Forest, Ont.
Vickie, Terry, Gregory and Jessica
Audrey & Dan Penford — Sarnia, Ont.
Taylor and Hunter

Also survived by two sisters, Akke and Sylvia and five brothers, Anne, Steve, George, Carl and Don and their families.

Ted was born on April 14, 1923 in Grouw, Friesland (the Neth.) In 1951, Ted & Audrey immigrated to Canada with two young sons. Ted was a proud Canadian, eager to serve his God, his church and his community in whatever ways he could. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and brother, a loyal friend and a good neighbour to many. He will be greatly missed. Funeral was held at Forest CRC on January 5, 2001. Pastor Pete Vander Beek officiated.

Address: 1310 Exmouth St., Pineview Apt. 18, Sarnia, ON N7S 3X9

Teachers

SMITHVILLE, ONT.:
Smithville District Christian High School has the following vacancies: **Business Education and Society Challenge & Change,** 2 courses (2/3 full time) effective as soon as possible. **French and/or Computer Science** and **Science and Music**, effective Sept.1, 2001, full time positions. Please contact:

Marc Stroobosscher, Principal
Smithville District Christian High School
RR 1, 6488 Smithville Rd., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Phone: 905-957-3255; fax: 905-957-3431

TORONTO, ONT.:
Toronto District Christian High School. Enrolment growth at TDCH is necessitating the addition of three staff for the 2001/2002 school year. Needed are teachers in Physics/Chemistry, Mathematics, Computers, a male Guidance teacher, and a full time person to teach Woodworking. Please direct applications to:

Ren Siebenga, TDCH
377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8
E-mail: rsiebeng@tdchristian.on.ca

Teachers

***Timothy Christian School** (Rexdale) has a definite opening for*

PRINCIPAL

beginning the 2001-2002 school year.

Our school of 200 students and thirteen staff was established in 1958 and is situated in a northwest suburb of Toronto, known as Rexdale. If you are interested in leading a dedicated staff and being supported by a committed Christian school community, we invite you to apply for this position. We look forward to assisting you use your talents and gifts in our school to help prepare God's children for service in His kingdom. Please send resumes (include references), a statement of faith and a brief philosophy of education to:

Principal Search Committee
Att.: Timothy Christian School,
28 Elmhurst Drive, Rexdale, ON M9W 2J5
If you wish to know more about the position please feel free to direct enquiries to:
Mr. William Groot 416-743-2554

CENTENNIAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, TERRACE, B.C.
TEACHING POSITIONS OPEN

Centennial Christian School invites applications for a **French teaching position** which involves teaching French at the Grade 7 through 12 level, and a **Primary (Grades 1-3)** teaching position.

Centennial Christian School is located in the beautiful Pacific Northwest area of British Columbia. Centennial Christian School is an inter-denominational school with a teaching staff of 17 and a support staff of 13, and presently offers Christian education to 236 students in Kindergarten - Grade 11. Grade 12 is being added in September 2001. Please contact the principal or vice principal for further details and send letter of application, resume and other information to:

Centennial Christian School
Curtis Tuininga, Principal
Edgar Veldman, Vice Principal
3608 Sparks St., Terrace, BC V8G 2V6
Phone: 250-635-6173; Fax: 250-635-9385
E-mail: ccs@telus.net

Miscellaneous

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CAMPUS MINISTRY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

announces an opening for a **half-time campus minister** to work in a team ministry with Dr. Brian Walsh and other associates. This ministry is focussed on graduate students and the successful candidate will be a person with graduate level education (at least a master's degree) who is deeply committed to a reformed worldview. An ease with the academic milieu of the university, pastoral skills, organizational ability, web-building and electronic communication skills is required. Letters of application which outline the candidate's vision for campus ministry, together with a full resume and two letters of reference should be sent to:

Dr. Nicholas Terpstra
Dept. of History, University of Toronto
100 St. George St.
Toronto, ON M5G 3G3

Closing Date is March 15. This three year contract begins July 1, 2001. Further inquires can be directed to Prof. Terpstra at nicholas.terpstra@utoronto.ca

Teachers

SMITHERS, B.C.:
Bulkley Valley Christian School located in the beautiful Bulkley Valley has definite openings at its Secondary Campus for **French** (Grades 8-12) and **Science/Math** (Grades 9-12) beginning August 2001. An interest in computers would be a definite asset. We are looking for energetic teachers interesting in joining an expanding school. There are also **possible openings for middle school** (Grade 8) and a **definite opening in Primary** (Grade 2). Bulkley Valley Christian School operates two campuses with over 480 students. The school is rooted in the Reformed tradition but serves a diverse denominational mix. We encourage your inquiries and look forward to talking with you.

Please contact:

John Bronsema, Principal
Bulkley Valley Christian School
Secondary Campus
3575 14 Ave Box 3635
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0
Phone 250-847-4238
Fax 250-847-3564

HANEY-PITT MEADOWS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL:
Haney-Pitt Meadows Christian School is inviting applicants for the 2001/2002 school year for **secondary French** in grades 8-12, **Senior Sciences and Learning Assistance Aid**. Moving cost for the successful French candidate will be considered. Haney-Pitt Meadows Christian School is an inter-denominational school of 310 students offering grades K-12 in September 2001. Future additions include a full size High School gym completed by the Fall of 2001. The school is located 45 minutes east of Vancouver in the city of Maple Ridge between Golden Ears Mountain and Pitt Lake along the North side of the Fraser River.

Interested applicants please send resume or contact:

Mr. Rod Berg, Haney-Pitt Meadows Christian School, 12140 203rd St., Maple Ridge, B.C., V2X 4V5, 604-465-4442. Fax: 604-465-1685
E-mail: office@hpmcs.bc.ca

Personal

Christian gentleman, in his 50s, would like to meet sincere, intelligent Christian woman with integrity, who takes life seriously, but is also fun-loving. Please send letter to **file #2709, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

Church News

Financial Assistance

Those from congregations in **Classis Niagara** who are planning to, or are presently studying for full-time ministry in the CRC as a pastor and/or evangelist and who are in need of financial assistance for the 2001-2002 academic year are invited to contact the secretary of the **Student Fund Committee: Jenny VanderBerg, 1662 Second Ave., RR 3, St. Catharines, ON L2R 6P9, phone: 905-641-1496, fax: 905-641-4624.** Application form deadline is March 15, 2001.

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
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is expanding to include Grade 11 in September 2001

Elementary Division

We invite applicants for a primary, a junior and an intermediate position. We also need a Computer Coordinator (12.5%), and a certified Resource Teacher (50%) or an experienced teacher willing to work towards certification. Positions may be combined.

Secondary Division

Dynamic teachers interested in a growing inter-denominational school are invited to apply for positions in: Mathematics, Senior Sciences and History

Send applications and complete resume to:
William Van Dyke, Principal
Maranatha Christian Academy
939 Northwood Street, Windsor, ON N9E 2B4
Information: 519-966-7424; Fax: 519-966-9519
E-mail: wvan@wincom.net

Miscellaneous

Arie Hoogerbrugge
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Fax: 519-291-4211

Job Opportunity

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18955 Dufferin St.,R.R. #2, Newmarket, ON
seeks a
PRINCIPAL
beginning August 1, 2001.
HMDCS is an interdenominational K-8 school serving 300 students.
For an information/application package
Please contact before **February 23/2001**:

Dan Vander Kooi, Chairman of the Board
R.R. #4, Bradford, ON L3Z 2A6
Tel: 905-775-4080 (evenings) / 905-775-3356 (days)
Fax: 905-775-2395 E-mail:dntvdkooi@altavista.com

Job Opportunities

If you are a compass, we have seventy young people seeking direction. Immanuel CRC of Brampton, Ont. is seeking a
YOUTH DIRECTOR
dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the existing programs of this well-established youth group. Church and area profiles available upon request. Please send resumes to **Immanuelyouthdirector@hotmail.com** or mail to:
Immanuel CRC, 63 Church St. E, Brampton, ON L6V 1G1
Att. Youth Director Calling Committee.

Construction Project Superintendent, Carpenters, Laborers, for Institutional/Commercial projects in the **London, Woodstock** and **St. Thomas** area. Also require a person capable of **doing estimating** and related work, in office located in the **Belmont** area.
Fax resume to 519-269-3574
or mail to:
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Miscellaneous

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Sermons for reading services.
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CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

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Teachers

LONDON, ONT.:
London District Christian Secondary School requires a versatile teacher with science background. We need someone **beginning February 23** to do a short term teaching assignment (**Grade 9 science, Biology 3A, Biology OA**) for several weeks while a staff member recuperates from surgery and then do a maternity leave **beginning April 2**. This would involve teaching **Chemistry 3A, grade 10 Career Studies,** and possibly a section of **English 20** (grade 10 applied.) This position could lead to full-time employment for the 2001-2002 school year as well.
There may be openings in other teaching areas for the 2001-2002 school year, especially in science and math. Interested applicants are asked to submit a letter of application, statement of faith, and resume. Contact:
Henry Kooy, Principal
London District Christian Secondary School
24 Braesyde Ave.,
London, ON N5W 1V3
e-mail: office@ldcss.on.ca
Phone: 519-455-4360,
Fax: 519-455-4364

ORANGEVILLE, ONT.:
Orangeville Christian School invites applications for an energetic, visionary
Principal/Teacher
preferably with 5 years teaching experience, to commence September 2001. Strengths in **French and/or Spec. Ed.** would be assets.
Future plans include a facility relocation, and our goal is to have the highest calibre of Christian Education that demonstrates the love and glory of our Lord in all areas of life, and in all our relationships. Is the Lord calling you? Please forward a resume with your statement of faith and philosophy of Christian Education to:
Orangeville Christian School
PO Box 176
Orangeville ON L9W 2Z6
Phone: 519-941-3381
Fax: 519-941-4391
E-mail address:
ocs@hurontario.net

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Miscellaneous

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...of bel één van de volgende nummers:
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616-531-4046/res.

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

DORDT COLLEGE

FACULTY POSITIONS

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning August 2001 in the following areas:

FACULTY

Art
Fine Arts; emphasis graphic design or art education

Communication (Two year position)
Mass communication; introductory speaking/listening

Education
Introduction, upper-level, and possibly graduate levels with emphasis on special education

Foreign Language
Spanish

Psychology
General/Applied

Social Work (Temporary positions with possibility for regular appointment)
Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses & field practice.
Generalist; macro-practice background; public policy, and/or research.

Theatre Arts
Theatre generalist, theatre history emphasis

Theology (One year position)
General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College

498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site:
www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

LANGLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

LCS, an inter-denomination Christian school system of about 700 students (K-12) is inviting applications for September 2001:

- Special Education (part-time)
- Teaching Vice-Principle at Middle School (Grade 7 and 8) responsible for curriculum and leadership.
- Computer Specialist (Grades 7-12)
- Development Director (part-time)
- Possible French position (Grades 7 and8)

Forward inquiries to:

Leo Smit, Superintendent
22702 - 48 th Avenue
Langley, BC V2Z 2T6
Phone 604-533-0839 Fax 604-533-0842
E-mail lmsmit@home.com

An evangelical Christian organization that supports individuals with developmental disabilities is recruiting applicants to work with people living in the Brampton and Halton area. You must be able to work as part of a caring team while upholding the rights and choices of people in a way which values people's differences. You must also be adaptable and calm in stressful situations. Relief and contract positions are available. DSW/PSW or equivalent is an asset. Interested applicants should send their resume to the attention of

Janet Paul
4375 Chesswood Ave.
North York, ON M3J 2C2
of they may be faxed to: 416-630-2579
E-mail: jpaul@Central-district.org
Applicants must have a valid drivers' licence and be willing to work shifts, including evenings and weekends

We thank all that respond, but only those applicants who qualify for an interview will be contacted.

The York Campus Ministry Committee of Classis Toronto of the Christian Reformed Church invites applications for a full-time

Campus Minister

to initiate and develop a campus ministry at York University, Toronto, Ontario.

The campus minister will serve as a **resource person, pastor and teacher** for the fostering of a strong Christian community of people. Exemplifying a life of faith and obedience to Christ, the campus minister will seek out and minister to members of the ethnically diverse York University community, including members of the Christian Reformed Church.

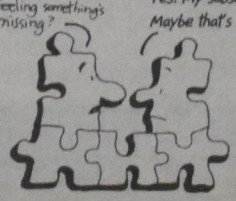
The campus minister we are looking for is **a devout Christian with a deep commitment to the Reformed expression of faith**;
- possesses initiative and is strongly self-motivated;
- possesses an appropriate advanced academic degree and theological/pastoral training;
- relates well with a wide range of ethnic and religious groups;
- is able to maintain good relations with other chaplains on campus;
- appreciates the unique character and diverse goals of York University.

A job description is available upon request.

Letters of application which outline the candidate's vision for campus ministry, together with a full resume and two letters of reference should be sent to:

Mr. Ted Bootsma, Chair,
York Campus Ministry Committee,
2 Princess Anne Drive,
Georgetown, ON L7G 2B9.

Closing date is March 15. Further inquiries can be directed to Mr. Bootsma at: <bootsma@axxent.ca>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Miscellaneous

40th Anniversary Celebration
for
John Calvin Christian School, Guelph Ont.
Saturday March 24, 2001
at the Italian Canadian Club 135 Ferguson St (Guelph).
Supper at 6:30 with entertainment to follow.
Tickets are $25 per person or $45 per couple and are to be purchased in advance by calling **Lisa Dickieson** at **519-763-9112**

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For a quick Letter to the Editor, send e-mail to:
cceditor@aol.com
or
fax to 905-682-8313

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Feb. 10	Mountain Area Christian Singles Dramatization & Social, **Burlington,** Ont. Info.: Sandra 905-388-7387
Feb. 17	40th Anniversary Athens Christian School, **Athens,** Ont. Info.: 613-924-9500, see ad in Jan.22 issue.
Feb. 24	Free Christian Discernment Seminar "Life after Charismania", Radisson Hotel, **Calgary,** Alta.; Ted Brooks, info. 1-800-816-8378; e-mail: issues@testingthespirits.com www.testingthespirits.com
Feb. 25	Sunday, 7:30 pm. Dedication service newly rebuilt pipe organ, organist Dr. John Vandertuin, Faith Evangelical Luthern Church, 57 Brant Ave., **Brantford;** choir & brass participation. Free will offering.
March 4	Dutch Service, Ancaster CRC, 70 Garner Rd. E. (Hwy 53), **Ancaster,** Ont. 3 p.m., Rev. De Bolster preaching.
March 9	PRO Organo Ottawa (RCCO series) presents Jonathan Oldengarm in a solo recital at the Notre Dame Cathedral-Basilica, Sussex Dr. St.Patrick, **Ottawa,** Ont. 8:00 p.m. Admission $15, $10. For Info call 613-728-8041, 613-682-8606.
Mar. 23-25	East CRC of **Strathroy,** Ont. 50th Anniversary Celebration weekend. Dinner Fri. evening; Sat. Open House and Evening Program; Sun. special worship services. Call Rie VanSteeg for dinner reservations or more info 519-245-6785 or e-mail: secretary@eastcrc.org.
March 24	40th Anniversary John Calvin Christian School, **Guelph,** Ont..,Supper 6:30; 519-763-9112. See ad.

Burlington, Ontario

Maranatha Homes

This award-winning Senior Citizen Homes is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation.

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Information from:
Rosanne van der Woerd, 3260 New Street
Burlington, ON L7N 3L4 905-639-9054

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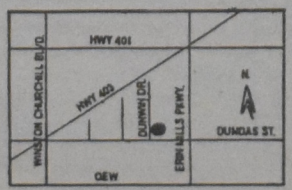

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News

Relief agencies respond to Central American earthquake

CO-LATINO PHOTOS

The devastating earthquake has left many El Salvadorans living on the street, or in temporary shelters (see top right).

CC Staff

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), World Vision and other Christian relief agencies are working hard to help the people of El Salvador recover from the devastating earthquake that rocked the country in mid-January.

"We slept in the house last night, but there have been strong aftershocks all day today so we are sleeping in the car tonight," writes Steve Michmerhuizen, a CRWRC employee, reflecting on the continuing effects of the earthquake in El Salvador. He and his wife Jan, will be leading CRWRC disaster response efforts in the most affected areas, reports CRWRC in a press release.

On Saturday, January 13, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale struck Central America. Many thousands of homes were completely destroyed, hundreds of people were killed or injured and many more missing, still buried under landslides.

Without drinking water

Although the earthquake was felt from Mexico City to Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala were the hardest hit. After 650 aftershocks, these countries are without electricity and drinking water. Landslides in and around San Salvador, El Salvador, were reported to have buried hundreds of homes. Many roads are completely blocked by mudslides and landslides, so it has been difficult to assess damage in outlying areas and to get help to the villages.

CRWRC has been working in El Salvador since 1976, helping individuals and communities to take steps out of poverty through literacy, agriculture, health, micro-enterprise, and justice education programs.

In 1986, when an earthquake hit El Salvador and killed 1,500 people, CRWRC worked with a consortium of relief organizations to provide emergency housing and food aid. Now that disaster has struck again, CRWRC is continuing to stand alongside the people of El Salvador, empowering them to recover and rebuild their lives.

El Salvador CRWRC staff, Alba Lopez and Jan and Steve Michmerhuizen, are working with local non-government agencies to survey the needs of the community and provide emergency food and housing supplies to the areas of greatest need. On January 16, CRWRC's International Relief Co-ordinator, Jacob Kramer, flew to San Salvador to assess the situation, co-ordinate with other Christian agencies, and initiate an extensive, long-term, relief program. Financial donations are urgently needed.

CRWRC will work in three stages to help out victims of the quake, Kramer told *Christian Courier*. I see us there for at least a year.... We are first supplying food, clothes and water. Next will be temporary shelter until early April, when the rainy season ends, and third, house-rebuilding. Two years ago, CRWRC rebuilt 1,100 houses in Honduras in the wake of Hurricane Mitch. The agency has set a similar goal for El Salvador, explains Kramer.

The city of San Salvador had few buildings ruined from the quake, because of the newer, modern buildings there, reports Kramer. In contrast, many homes in outlying areas have collapsed because of their poorer quality. Because it is based in San Salvador, the country's government has not paid much attention to the earthquake, he observes.

President sends SOS

According to the Catholic news agency Zenit, El Salvador's President, Francisco Flores, has sent an SOS to the country's creditors. Specifically, he has asked for longer terms and more flexible conditions, including cancellation of the debt, in order to cope with the devastating situation caused by the earthquake. El Salvador suffers from $4 billion in foreign debt, according to the Catholic relief agency Caritas.

Gilberto Gallegos, director of Caritas-El Salvador, estimated that 4,000 people have died as a result of the quake and another 47,000 people displaced. The quake has affected more than one million people — one out of every six Salvadorans.

Most of those missing were from the San Salvador suburb of Santa Tecla, where a landslide triggered by the earthquake buried as many as 500 houses, according to Newsroom. Officials estimate that throughout the country more than 16,000 homes have been destroyed and another 46,000 have been partially damaged.

The needs outweigh the ability of aid groups to respond, amid a damaged infrastructure that still has not recovered from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch two years ago, says Kevin Cook, World Vision's Latin American communications co-ordinator. "There are serious distribution problems; a lot of communities remain cut off by landslides, and our supplies are disrupted, so our relief efforts have been slowed," he told Newsroom.

As many as half of El Salvador's six million people have lost their fresh water supply, and health officials fear an epidemic of the rotavirus, which can be fatal to small children.

The quake caused about 250 landslides that completely destroyed some towns, reports Newsroom. World Vision initially is focusing relief efforts on two devastated communities where it has operated development programs, Tacuba and San Julian, west of San Salvador. As many as 90 per cent of that area's homes have been destroyed, affecting more than 4,000 families, says Cook. At least 14,000 people have no food or shelter. World Vision plans to erect temporary shelters for victims, and provide daily food rations.

Emotional, spiritual n

Addressing emotional and spiritual needs is an essential part of World Vision's aid, explains Cook. The agency is helping set up centres in local facilities, including churches, to provide counseling for the many families which have suffered loss. The agency often works with churches "because we believe that recovery from disasters requires a holistic relief effort that includes addressing spiritual and psychological needs."

The rural local churches often lack counselling methods to deal with common disaster-related afflictions, such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, and require outside help, he says.

Many survivors must face the trauma of losing their livelihood, reports Newsroom. The quake badly damaged many coffee mills and warehouses that form the economic backbone of poor rural areas.

Voortman

Color printing of this issue of *Christian Courier* is made possible by the generosity of Voortman Cookies Ltd. Thanks!

News Digest

Rabid transit

TORONTO — Was it rapid transit or rabid transit? *Globe and Mail* writer Douglas McArthur recently offered a Rapid Transit Award to a Bristol, England, motorist who flew into a blind rage when the car in front of him braked abruptly and drove erratically. He gave chase for eight km. down a steep hill and around sharp curves, shouting abuse and lurching through traffic.

At the time, he happened to be driving a double-decker bus packed with about 80 passengers. Children were flung into the aisles and riders went mute with fear. The driver, who offered no apologies, was suspended.

One dog on ice

LISMORE, N.S. (CP) — A dog which spent five days drifting on ice to Nova Scotia from P.E.I. has been united with her owner. Scooter, an American foxhound, was rescued recently by construction worker Rick Kehoe in Lismore, Nova Scotia. "She was running back and forth on the ice," he explained. "I had to go out on the ice for her."

The dog had shed a few pounds, but was otherwise healthy. After her rescue, Scooter dined on salmon and meat. Her incredible journey began when she was running after a coyote near Big Point, P.E.I. She became separated from her owner and, despite a transmitter around her neck, the owner couldn't locate her.

Christian bumper stickers

WINSLOW, Maine — Here are some ideas for Christian bumper stickers, from Jeff and Jennifer Fowler of Winslow, Maine:

- Be Fishers of Men.... You catch 'em, He'll clean 'em.
- A family altar can alter a family.
- Forbidden fruits create many jams.
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.
- Having truth decay? Brush up on your Bible!
- If God is your co-pilot, swap seats!
- Watch your step carefully! Everyone else does.
- Worry is the darkroom in which "negatives" are developed.
- Are you wrinkled with burdens? Come on into church for a faith lift.